ART MONTHLY
AUSTRALIA
May 2010 Issue 229

SAMSTAG MUSEUM

Anne & Gordon
Samstag Museum of Art
University of South Australia

unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum

14 May – 16 July 2010

Mirror Mirror: Then and Now

Curator Dr Ann Stephen

Observance by Bill Viola

UniSA · The University of Sydney · IMA Institute of Modern Art · Gordon Darling Foundation · BESTEC · Helpmann Academy · Dowie Doole · mosaic audio visual

A project by the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane and the University Art Gallery, The University of Sydney, in association with the Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide

Image: Mikala DWYER, *IOU*, 2009, mirror acrylic, 80 x 180 x 30 cm, courtesy of Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
Samstag Scholar 2005

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are those of the authors and not necessarily
those of the publisher and editor.
Readers are invited to make up their own minds
on issues debated in *Art Monthly Australia*.

Letters are welcome.

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Brian Corr, Mel Douglas
Deb Jones, Jessica Loughlin
Janice Vitkovsky, Richard Whiteley

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Gallery 2 ***Some and None: Jewellery as Graphics***
David Neale

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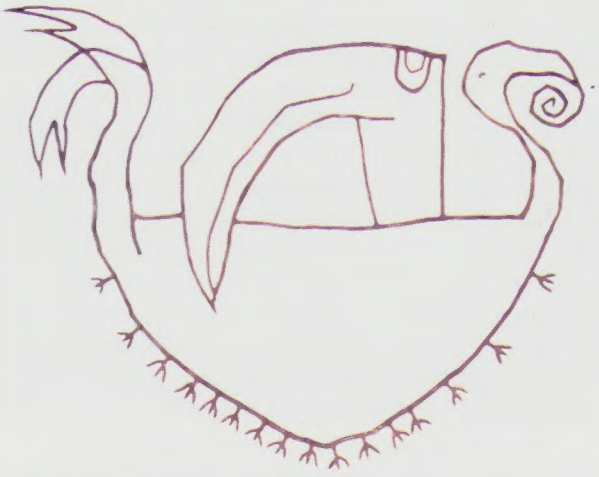

LINE UP
6 MARCH - 29 AUGUST

A collection exhibition which traces organic and geometric linear marks made by artists in their drawings, paintings, prints, sculpture and textile works.

Works by Leigh Colacino, Paddy Fordham Wainburranga, Dale Frank, Ian Gentle, Robert Jacks, Bronwyn Oliver, John Olsen, Paul Partos, Gloria Petyarre, Lloyd Rees, Jan Senbergs, Guy Stuart, David Voigt, and Ken Whisson.

image: Ian Gentle,1945-2010, *Dagg in Ducktoat*,1997, eucalypt wood, 207 x 237 x 3cm. Gift of the artist, 1997.

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Keeping It Visual:

The Studio-based PhD

PETER HILL

Since America finally entered the debate about studio-based PhDs in the visual arts, books, magazine articles and conference halls have filled with discussion on the topic. Every conceivable point of view has been put forward: some urge a total re-think of the whole university system, in addition to the art school's place within it; others urge an expansion of how we define 'research'; and yet others, such as Professor Robert Storr at Yale, deny that artists do, or should do, research at all.

Most of us know what it is like when a department or school goes through that death by a thousand cuts known as a 'restructure'. Every faculty member puts forward their own utopian vision of how an art school should be run and in the end nothing can be decided upon, which is usually just as well because management has probably decided already. It is a little like that with the whole PhD debate. Many, although by no means all, who lead the debate in print come from a 'theory' background and see theory as making up a large part of the studio-based PhD submission. I argue that many of those theoreticians have never fully understood that art is a language in its own right, like music or mathematics, and arguments can be made in paint and through drawing and photography, or in the physicality of matter (sculpture, installation art) without recourse to words. The new knowledge produced is contained within the physicality and idea of the artwork, not in the text that accompanies it, although the text is very useful (especially to the examiner) as an explanation, or *exegesis*, to the studio-based research. The revolutionary work of the Impressionists, for example, was argued through paint on canvas, not as text on paper which at some later date would be translated into *tâches* of paint on canvas. Indeed, it was imperative that words be kept out of the artist's head as much as possible so that *visual thinking* could occur. Significantly, the methodology of the artist is driven by trial and error and is profoundly reliant on 'process' as well as speculation, or asking the question 'what if?'

Art historians and theorists generally arrive after the messiness of the primal event and are thus well placed to apply a disciplined methodology to the interpretation of not just the artwork but the society through which the artist lived. Artists should of course be exposed to these theories while at art school, but most, in truth, go well beyond the confines of postcolonial theory, or deconstruction, or queer theory, in the search for inspiration, and feel themselves free to construct artworks from any and all aspects of this strange universe in which we find ourselves: from biochemistry and animal behaviourism to systems theories, the psycho-geography of the city, or the vagaries of the stock market. All are grist to the artist's research mill and should be encouraged.

Our language is visual. My mantra for artists, and for research programs, has always been KEEP IT VISUAL. We are artists, not scholars, or musicians, or mathematicians. Some say our studio research has more resonances with the scientist's laboratory than with the interpretive studies of the art historian, yet our outcomes are not scientific, they are poetic, or socially reflective, and relate to the human condition in its entirety.

Artistic production is often at its most exciting and subversive before it has been named or had theories built around it. In the early 1970s, John A. Walker's *Art Since Pop* described the work of minimalist sculptors, performance artists, and a new breed of thinker/maker to be called Conceptual artists that included Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner and Joseph Beuys. These new and not yet understood movements were thus initially defined by what they were not, i.e., they were not Pop Art. So in a weird Rumsfeldian way, when we are talking about artists undertaking doctoral research we are talking about 'Unknown Unknowns'. It is not so important that artists develop a disciplined methodology as that they discover and develop their own visual language, a 'personal methodology', that is disciplined according to its own internal structure (as numerous artists – Cy Twombly, Imants Tillers, Emily Kngwarray, Douglas Gordon, Hany Armanious and Rosalie Gascoigne – have all done).

My own journey into the PhD debate began in the mid-1990s. At different times I have been a sceptic, an evangelist, a candidate, a supervisor, and an examiner. Now, I see myself as an optimistic realist and like to think that the bottle is at least half-full and acceptably drinkable.

Australia has led the way in studio-based PhDs, the UK followed a few years later, and now America is eyeing the

water nervously. Which brings me back to the wide range of books currently available on the topic. One of the interesting and satisfying things is the contribution that Australia has made to the international debate. The recently released *Artists with PhDs* is edited by James Elkins, Professor of Art History at the Art Institute of Chicago. The first part of it contains eleven quite contradictory essays ranging from Timothy Emlyn Jones's 'Research Degrees in Art and Design', to Charles Harrison's 'When Management Speaks', to Hilde Van Gelder's 'The Future of the Doctorate in the Arts', to James Elkins himself, 'The Three Configurations of Studio-Art PhDs'. Part Two is comprised of examples of different PhDs from around the world and of the eight reproduced five are Australian candidates: Jo-Anne Duggan, University of Technology, Sydney; Sue Lovegrove, Australian National University, Canberra; Frank Thirion, Australian National University; Ruth Waller, Australian National University; and Christl Berg, University of Tasmania, Hobart. The remaining three come from Chelsea College of Art, University of the Arts, London, and Slade School of Art.

Turning to *Art Practice as Research* from Sage Publications in California, we find contributions from a range of COFA (UNSW) staff including Joanna Mendelssohn and the late Nick Waterlow, Anne Graham (University of Newcastle) and Jayne Dyer. In *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School*, from The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada, we have a book that is totally international in content and edited by Brad Buckley and John Conomos from Sydney College of the Arts. Other contributors include Sue Baker and Edward Colless, both from the Victorian College of the Arts and Music.

The contributors to some of these books totally understand what visual arts research is, notably in *Thinking Through Practice*. Others show that twinned with the danger of not understanding that art production is a form of research, is the other danger of not understanding what a PhD is. The most useful book in the list above is *How to get a PhD, a handbook for students and their supervisors* by Estelle M. Phillips and Derek S. Pugh, now in its 4th edition (Open University Press, 2005). It is full of very good practical advice to candidates and supervisors on such topics as 'Managing your Supervisor', but it is in the wonderfully titled chapter on 'How Not to Get A PhD' that we find section-headings that relate to some of the mistakes made by some of the authors of *Artists with PhDs*. 'Not understanding the PhD by overestimating what is required' is followed by one called 'Not understanding the PhD by underestimating what is required', and the next, sadly very important, section, 'Not having a supervisor who knows what a PhD requires'.

Many overestimate the issue of 'originality'. This book puts it into perspective, and lists fifteen quite separate ways in which a candidate can be original. They only need to satisfy one of these (even in an otherwise pedestrian presentation) to be awarded the PhD. These include:

> Setting down a major piece of new information in writing for the first time [or for painters I would include 'on canvas for the first time'; 'on a cave wall for the first time'; 'in a new material for the first time'];
>
> Continuing a previously original piece of work [perhaps Damien Hirst extending Jeff Koons's use of objects suspended in glass tanks];
>
> Showing originality in testing somebody else's idea [Michael Landy re-visiting Ives Tinguely, for example];
>
> Being cross-disciplinary and using different methodologies [the i-cinema collaboration between the College of Fine Arts and the Faculty of Engineering at UNSW, notably in the work of Denis del Favero];
>
> Taking a particular technique and applying it in a new area [Gary Carsley laminating images onto IKEA furniture for the 2009 Singapore Biennale].

It is worth repeating that a candidate need only be successful in one of the fifteen ways of showing originality to satisfy the doctoral award, and you can find the other ten ways on page 62 of the 4th edition of this remarkable book.

Elsewhere Philips and Pugh caution: 'You may hear people telling you about the "ideal" length of thesis. Pay no attention. A thesis should be no longer than it needs to be in order to report what you have done, why you did it, and what you have concluded from the results of your work. Don't be impressed by theses that run to two volumes: it is often (correctly) said that a lot is written to obscure the fact that little has been achieved.'

I once asked a research scientist what was the shortest PhD he had seen and he replied: 'About two or three pages. There was an equation and its justification – in fact, the examiners' reports were longer than the PhD itself.' So while the PhD is a universal award it is presented in many different ways. The written component for a studio PhD might range from 10,000 to 40,000 words. The studio component might be as large as a Christo wrapped coastline or as small as an Indian miniature. It is the rigour of the PhD combined with the new knowledge, and the conclusions drawn, that are important.

How to get a PhD states quite clearly that a PhD is a research training exercise, the outcome of which 'should allow you to examine the PhDs of others with authority'. It is the start of your research career, not the culmination of a life-time's work.

P6/ Yvette Watt, *Second Sight* series, 2008/8, giclee print on Hahnemuehle photo rag paper, 65 x 58cm; clockwise from top left: sheep, cow, chicken, pig.

1/ Brigita Ozolins, *Look On*, 2005, mirrored Perspex,175cm x 900cm x 3mm. Installation view, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Ten Days on the Island Festival.

2/ James Newitt and Justy Phillips, *write/here*, 2005-07, 27 billboards installed around Hobart between 1-10 April, 2007.

p7: 1/ Meg Keating, *Her name is Tan Hua*, 2007, performance installation with Mei Kuang Li, Taipei Artist Village, Taiwan. Image courtesy the artist and Criterion Gallery, Hobart.

2/ Wayne Brooks, *Pozzo's prophecy*, 2007, acrylic on board, 90 x 120cm. All images this article are courtesy the artists, who all hold PhDs.

There are too many good things about this book to recount them all in a single essay. Chapter 6 is extremely useful in which the 'form' of the PhD is examined, using analogies with music. As a sonata is a broad but particular form of music, so too, the authors explain, is the PhD a particular form of research. 'Since not all research conforms to it,' they contend, 'you have to be aware of what the elements of its forms are'.

I first entered the debate in 1995 when I wrote an article for this magazine called 'Is There a Doctor in the Art School?' (AMA, No 84, October 1995). I received requests for photocopies of it from overseas, from academics in Canada, the UK, and America. And I was challenged to do one myself by Terry Batt at RMIT University, one of several around the world that were already offering fledgling doctoral programs. I've now been through the process as a candidate, a supervisor, and an examiner. In almost all cases I've been impressed by the extraordinary high standards of not just the studio research and studio supervision but the quality of the writing found in the written component or exegesis.

One piece of advice for candidates is, 'Don't expect your examiners to be mind readers'. Tell them upfront what your research questions are, and return to them in the Conclusion. These might be listed as bullet points somewhere in the Introduction. It is quite proper that these questions will change during the course of your project. In the Conclusion you might, for example, say that Question 2 dropped out altogether, while two new questions arose out of Question 3. The examiners will see that your research has evolved between the start and the finish and that, importantly, you have not been trying to predict the outcomes of your research.

It is also useful to state near the beginning what your research is not about. Somewhere in the text you may use several case studies looking at the work of others in the field and locating your own research in relation to theirs. This helps examiners to locate the breadth of your knowledge. Sketchbooks and journals are also important ways of showing the development of your research. Much of the first third of your PhD you will spend collecting information and doing a thorough 'library search'. For visual researchers this means looking at what exhibitions have been mounted, globally, in your field as much as it means being aware of texts published in books. In the final third of your PhD you might feel overwhelmed with information and source material. Try and have a mental cut-off point as to where this project ends and the next one(s) begin. As someone once said, the sign of good research is that two questions now exist where only one existed previously. So keep a box-file or sketchbook for 'future projects' and look forward to the continuation of your research career.

Keep it visual. Be Curious. And, as Samuel Beckett said: 'Fail. Fail again. Fail better.' ■

Background reading:

Estelle M. Phillips and Derek S. Pugh, *How to get a PhD, a handbook for students and their supervisors* (4th edition), Open University Press, 2005.

James Elkins (ed.), *Artists with PhDs, on the new doctoral degree in Studio Art*, New Academia Publishing, 2009.

Steven Henry Madoff (ed.), *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)*, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, 2009.

John Conomos and Brad Buckley (eds), *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School, the artist, the PhD, and the academy*, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2009.

Lesley Duxbury, Elizabeth M. Grierson, and Diane Waite (eds), *Thinking Through Practice, art as research in the academy*, RMIT Publishing, Melbourne, 2008.

Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (eds), *Practice as Research, approaches to creative arts enquiry*, I.B. Taurus & Co. Ltd, New York, 2007.

Rowena Murray, *How to Survive your Viva*, Open University Press, England, 2003.

Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research, inquiry in visual arts* (2nd edition), Sage, California, 2010.

Robert Nelson, *The Jealousy of Ideas, research methods in the visual arts*, www.writing-pad.ac.uk, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2009.

Dr Peter Hill is an artist and writer and Adjunct Professor at RMIT University, Melbourne.

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gone in no time

KEN BOLTON

2009, at the Australian Experimental Art Foundation (AeAF), closed with a four-phase series of mini-residencies – in-situ, performative art-making, under the collective title *gone in no time (gone in no time)*. Each phase had a pair of artists co-inhabiting the AeAF gallery space to make work that would variously respond to the space and to the work of the other artists, especially as each pair abandoned the gallery leaving their mark – their art – behind them.

Some readers will be aware that with *gone in no time*, and under new director Domenico de Clario, the institution has rebranded itself: the Experimental Art Foundation (EAF) is now the Australian Experimental Art Foundation. Behind this is an assertion, or re-assertion, of the Foundation's national importance and uniqueness, or a formal re-dedication to art-as-experiment. At the time of its founding in 1975 the EAF was the first space funded by the Australia Council as an alternative to the commercial gallery system. Since that time other spaces have sprung up in each state, under the rubric, since the '80s, of 'contemporary art spaces' – which sounds more professional, yes, but a little less purposive than the AeAF's own mission.

gone in no time also signals the inflection de Clario intends to give the AeAF's mission statement: a program devoted to the temporal, and focusing on the imaginative and flexibly responsive, on the act rather than the crafted achievement of preconceived outcomes. All these are terms central to the EAF's founding years, set up as it was to promulgate conceptual, post-object and performance art and in opposition to the expensive, luxury-trade decoration of 'ambitious abstract painting' (as Clement Greenberg would have had it).

Over two months, the exhibition paired artists Annette Lawrence (USA) and Jacobus Capone (WA), followed by Yhonnie Scarce (SA/Vic) and Nicholas Selenitsch (Vic), Margit Brunner (Austria and SA) and Danielle Freakley (Vic/USA), and Ardi Gunawan and Katherine Huang (both Victorian). The last set closed with additional South Australian support from Jason Sweeney and Fiona Sprott who operated from the bookshop space appended to the gallery.[1] As the project rolled on it was thoroughly documented: the gallery showed film of each artist's work being made and put in place; filmed interviews were streamed on the AeAF's website (http://www.eaf.asn.au/2009/goneinnotime.html). A good many visitors returned on a weekly or even more frequent basis to see the changes as they were wrought.

Everybody did something interesting. The course of the development waxed and waned – or, rather, an aesthetic 'pulsing' effect was the result: fresh artists would typically begin with a pause and a surge of activity would occur

1/ Nick Selenitsch in limbo. Photograph by Nick Selenitsch.

2/ Ardi Gunawan's work with AeAF gallery's internal walls. Photograph by Teri Hoskin.

Yhonnie Scarce in transit, with her work in the foreground. Photograph by Nick Selenitsch.

4/ Margit Brunner's drawing implements. Photograph by Teri Hoskin.

All images are installation views, AeAF Gallery, Adelaide. All images courtesy the artists and AeAF. See full project documentation via http://aeaf.org.au/archive/documentation.html

around orientation, creating space, and then another as new work was produced, which would culminate with a brief hiatus as one cadre left and another arrived. Was it the situation, inherently, or de Clario's choice of artists, for a '60/'70s vocabulary and armory of moves seemed a unifying factor? The situation was always likely to lend itself to that: artist inheriting a space as 'problem' and as 'material'. So there was much mechanical adumbration, serial processes, a good deal of Carl Andre/Richard Serra/Robert Smithson-style stacking and displacing and leaning of materials; the moveable walls of the AeAF in particular lent themselves to this. The gallery looked busy and full of energy with a very purposive air.

US artist Annette Lawrence's practice is a development of classic Minimalist concerns. As well as making a pleasingly watchable film Lawrence re-ran a previous idea, here adapted to the AeAF gallery's perimeter walls. In the past this work had been given spiral form. On this occasion it ran around the AeAF walls, a faint grey line. Like a picture rail at about head height. The line was made up of even, uninflected vertical pencil marks, each representing a week in which the artist had been menstruating. It went right back to her first period and right up to the present. (Lawrence's diary-keeping habits and attraction to system began early in life.) Inexpressive, yes. And at the same time a biography of sorts, a time-keeping, even a reminder of mortality.

Diaristic, but in a different, more poetic register, was Jacobus Capone's project. Capone stated the rules and procedures he had determined for himself: they were followed five days a week for the full two weeks. Capone arose around dawn each morning, walked to any green area near where he was staying, photographed the dawn sunrise with a Polaroid and gathered a bag full of the grasses typical of the area. The photographs were left unpeeled and worn each day, taped (painfully) to his chest. At the gallery the greenery, stalk by stalk, was sticky-taped to the wall and an outline drawn around each piece. This last step generated an even-patterned expanse that, changing in kind from day to day, gradually filled the floor and much of the wall space of, approximately, a quarter or third of the gallery. Each day, a square of gold-leaf paper was mounted on the wall – a line of them, finally. Each gold square covered a Polaroid image, which remained unexamined underneath. For Capone (who had also taken a vow of silence) all of this meant that much of each day was spent kneeling on the floor or standing high on ladders.

If Annette Lawrence's work, true to her lineage, seemed a case of Sol Le Witt meets Lawrence Weiner meets On Kawara, Capone's spreading Rosetta Stone of grass stems, his monkish rigour and dramatically abstract, 'Eastern' representation of the sun (the gold-leaf squares invoking some kind of 'absolute') seemed a return to something Viennese – whether of Klimt or 1970s Actionist performance. Both artists' endeavours foregrounded procedure.

Yhonnie Scarce and Nicholas Selenitsch took possession next. Scarce moved into the corner left free by Lawrence's work; Selenitsch began clearing away space for himself in Capone's plot. There were jokes about Rauschenberg's *Erased De Kooning*, but Selenitsch intended no critique or one-upmanship. Some walls were moved around and Selenitsch put in place a number of limbo sticks across the gallery space – for the intellectual gallery-goer to exercise by and at the same time to consider the ceiling, abstract and white, for inspiration. Scarce meanwhile, sitting at a small work table, a little like a piece-worker sewing, set about the production of a few dozen laboriously rolled and bound objects like small winding cloth funerary items. These looked traditional, indigenous, and mysterious: an indigenous aesthetic meets that of, say, Eva Hesse – the same distressed materials, same matter-of-fact production. On the last day she tipped the table forward and spilled them all on the floor, work done!

Margit Brunner and Danielle Freakley arrived next. Brunner created a kind of wand or measuring stick and marked out space on the walls in a way which continued a smaller project she had produced for exhibition during the year at Felt Gallery and which had made a joking reference to Tiepolo and his work's distribution around much of old Europe's palace architecture, high on the ceiling, marking cornices, et cetera. Brunner's interaction with the space deliberately courted, and recorded, a kind of failure. Freakley stopped and started and in effect came and went, leaving a cloud of intriguing proposals behind her. Her work was almost entirely conceptual. She contemplated a graffiti-ing escapade but didn't wish to risk arrest; she considered and filmed a short porn movie with fit young amateurs, who then got cold feet. Perhaps, she thought, she would broadcast 'just the soundtrack?' A performance was mooted where she would throw Capone's grass stems at invited Adelaide people. Eventually she did some graffiti in the gallery itself. Freakley and Brunner themselves exchanged many ideas about their very different art backgrounds.

Ardi Gunawan and Katherine Huang's arrival lifted the pace of change. While Huang found a quiet corner to begin the production of small, maquette-like installations and proposals for (imaginary, speculative) works made, possibly, to a large scale, Gunawan blocked off access to most of the gallery with a provocative barricade of chairs and tables and moveable walls. Hours later their configuration changed again and continued to evolve over the next week or so. The vast internal walls of the gallery space were leaned at vertiginous angles and in tense relations to each other and to the encroaching viewer. The effects reminded of Serra (the *One-Ton Prop*), of Ronald Bladen's *Big X*, of *Spiral Jetty* even, so much did they reek of will, decision, intervention. Amusingly, they also resembled Huang's more miniature table-top sculptures.

If *gone in no time* proves prophetic, the AeAF will become a locus for a great deal of activity focusing again on an ephemeral, action-based art production; art that seeks to foreground experimentation and to critique its accompaniment to a status quo of endless but repetitive visual novelty. There was nothing that resembled an artefact-for-sale, no art referencing popular culture with the sly critique that amounts to recognition and approbation. ■

1. Sweeney and Sprott devised a performance based on quotes chosen at random, and out of curiosity, from books in the AeAF's rather boffin-friendly bookshop.

gone in no time (gone in no time) was held at the Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, 15 September to 7 November, 2009.

Ken Bolton is Deputy Director of the AEAF and Manager of the AEAF Dark Horsey bookshop. He is a poet, art critic, editor and publisher. One of his more recent books, *Art Writing: Art in Adelaide* in the 1990s and 2000s, was published by Contemporary Art Centre South Australia in 2009.

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9 shots 5 stories

IAN McLEAN

This is the second part of an essay which began life in a conference paper at the 2nd Imagined Australia conference, Bari, Italy, in June 2009, and the Daphne Mayo lecture, University of Queensland, September 2009. The first part (including the first two stories, 'From beginning to end' and 'The story') is published in AMA #228, April 2010.

The scandal

> Artists collaborate with one another all the time, yet if any non-Aboriginal artists took them at their word and related to Michael Nelson [Tjakamarra] and his work as they would to any other contemporary artist, they were reviled as cultural colonialists and thieves. (Vivien Johnson, 1997)

While the pairing of *The nine shots* and *Five dreamings* in the 1986 Sydney Biennale catalogue explicitly addressed the Biennale's theme, Origins Originality + Beyond, growing anxieties about the place of Aboriginal art in the national culture, heightened by the considerable presence of Aboriginal art at the Biennale, inevitably created a small storm about the theft of Aboriginal culture. This fed a deeper complaint. The uneasiness about collapsing the borders of Aboriginal and European culture had never been placated, and it produced the most trenchant criticism. Davila was the most cutting, accusing Tillers of taking 'a *dominant* role with regard to Aboriginal culture':

> [Tillers] quotes their iconographies, but there is no aspiration to belong to that world. Nine postmodernist shots are aimed at the death of the primitive, repeating the strategies of modernism. Aboriginal quotation is stripped bare of any social or political connotations, and 'aboriginality' is placed within the picture as resolved: namely, reconciled with the European tradition, cleansed and abstracted in an idealised and marketable package, one that represents the collapse of differences.

Davila asked: 'As for a possible rapprochement with the Aborigines, upon what ground could we meet together without, *at the very least,* conceding the right to accumulate the borrowed fictions of our own past?'

Neither Tillers nor Tim Johnson – whom Davila also criticised – were naïve. Both had been deeply engaged with Indigenous art for several years, and were well aware of the history and politics associated with it. In his 1982 article 'Locality Fails', Tillers had warned against reducing Aboriginal art to a purely aesthetic question that forgets the terrible history of colonialism. 'The history of white settlement in Australia in relation to the Aborigines', he wrote, 'is a story of homicide, rape, the forcible abduction of children from their parents and the methodical dispossession of the lands'. Tillers alluded to this troubled history in his first appropriation of an Aboriginal painting,

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Island of the dead (1982), and reiterated it more strongly in *The nine shots*. In juxtaposing *Five stories* with a painting that dramatically pictured the war and despair that shaped modern German national identity, Tillers creates an explicit echo between the two works in terms of their local histories and identities. The stoic, crucified soldier in Baseltitz's *Forward wind* reflects back the brutal history of colonialism onto Tjakamarra's Dreaming stories, and in the process upturns the myths of *terra nullius* that founded the Australian nation.

Thus Tillers was taken by surprise at accusations of his naïve complicity in its colonising processes. He was focused on emerging issues of cultural globalisation and its effects on postcolonial agency, which were also on the mind of Sandy Nairne as he led an international British film team to the Sydney Biennale. Like Tillers, he had been galvanised by the 'ferocious debate in the art press' provoked by the 1984 MoMA *Primitivism* exhibition. In his mind this debate was forcing the artworld to interrogate its own blind Eurocentrism, which was particularly evident in the First World 'internationalism' of the Biennale culture. The Director of the sixth Sydney Biennale, Nick Waterlow, promised to break this mold by also including Second and Third World and Indigenous artists, thus creating intersections between artists that, observed Nairne, 'would never otherwise be available'. No wonder Nairne singled out Tillers and Tjakamarra for extended analysis, giving them a key role in what he billed as an emerging globalisation of contemporary art. Thus Nairne was uninterested in the scandal. In his mind *The nine shots* was right on target. The scandal reflected a specifically Australian bad conscience.

Despite the seriousness of the scandal, neither *The nine shots* nor *Five stories* were closely analysed. Davila, for example, did not even mention Tjakamarra or his painting. Few critics had an adequate template for analysing *Five stories* in terms of contemporary art. Nairne gave considerable space to Tjakamarra's voice but framed it in ethnographic terms. The question of its contemporaneity was displaced onto *The nine shots*, which only increased the burden on the painting.

If Davila had studied *Five stories* or talked to Tjakamarra, his initial agitation about exploitation may have been calmed. Tjakamarra was not naïve nor saw himself as a victim. He might have been new to the international artworld and unfamiliar with its postmodernist spin, but he had known the post-conceptual artist Tim Johnson (a friend of Tillers) for several years and was aware of his paintings that appropriated Western Desert designs. If Tjakamarra was perplexed when first seeing a reproduction of *The nine shots* in the Biennale catalogue, he did understand the significance of his story being appropriated by a 'top artist' in a top venue. He too copied not the look of things but iconic designs of others. He was fully aware of the obligations this entailed to the original, and that it cemented a connection between him and Tillers and hence contemporary art. Tjakamarra saw not an act of imperialism, but mimicry. Indigenous cosmology is a complex landscape of mimicry and repetition in which the dynamic reciprocation of power between the original and the copy has become so entangled that one cannot be distinguished from the other. The one is the other; the copy is the original. Thus Tjakamarra would have fully grasped Rex Butler's point that 'the appropriated copy is always ... a testament to ... [the original's] lasting power'. As if to prove this, over the next few years *Five stories* became amongst the most reproduced paintings in Australian contemporary art and Tjakamarra the model of the new Indigenous contemporary artist, its first superstar.

Thus, the scandal was just one early stage in the story of Tjakamarra and Tillers. The narrative developed quickly. On being introduced to Tillers by Tim Johnson at the Biennale, Tjakamarra retrospectively approved his borrowing. Vivien Johnson – who was there – said that Tjakamarra understood Tillers's gesture as a commitment to dialogue and cultural exchange and not as a naked appropriation of his Dreaming stories. It inspired Tjakamarra to suggest that he and Tim should collaborate on a painting. Later Tjakamarra also collaborated with Tillers. Their most recent collaboration, *Fatherland* (2008), replays *The nine shots* as if recalling their initial, momentous meeting twenty-two years earlier but also its continuing presence as ongoing repetition[1]. What then is the truth of the painting?

The truth

> 'Aboriginality', therefore, is a field of intersubjectivity in that it is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue ... Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people create 'Aboriginalities'. (Marcia Langton, 1993)

If the accusations hurled at *The nine shots* took Tillers by surprise, they did point to the truth of the painting, which concerned certain coincidences between Western Desert and contemporary art. In general coincidences are important for Tillers, but for him this one was particularly interesting because it went to key issues of conceptual art that had inspired him for the previous fifteen years.

Tillers's post-conceptual practice was conceived in what he called 'ecological' terms. He sought to replace the

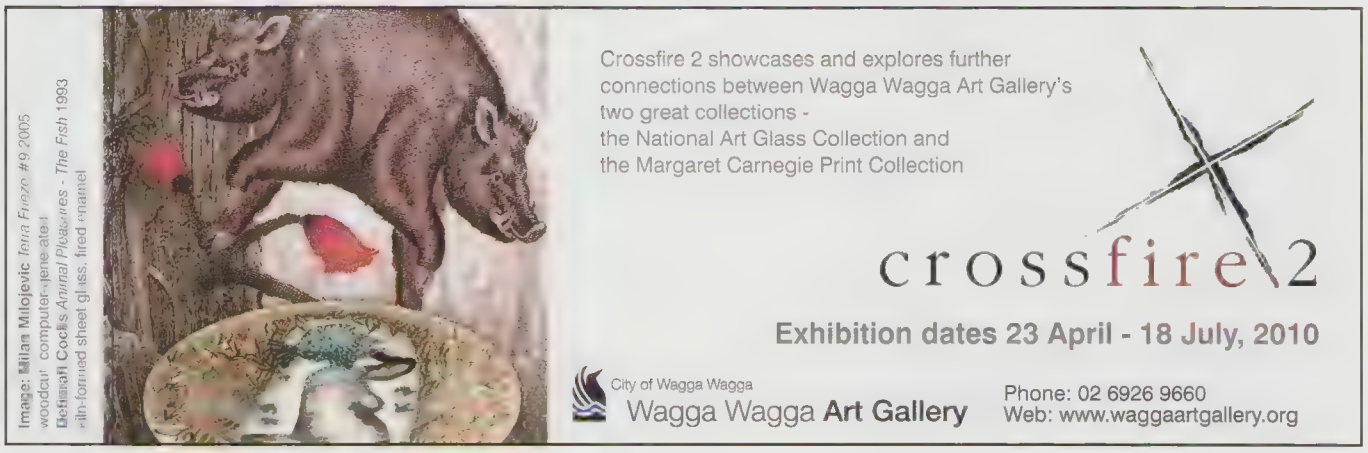
Image: Milan Milojevic Tana Freeze #9 2005
woodcut computer-generated
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autonomous ego that hitherto had been the centre of modern art, with holistic, open-ended, self-generating systems that, like a living organism, responded to and fed back into the local ecology – a culturally diverse *habitus* that mirrored the interactive diversity of the natural world. Hence, instead of adopting the aura of *savant* or genius, Tillers proposed a sort of Darwinian methodology – which he had learned from conceptual art – that processed existing information from multiple sources, displacing it into new patterns according to changing situations. His appropriation art can be interpreted in this Darwinian light as a system that, like nature, processes information through replication or copying, thus decentring any original including the self.

Tillers's 'ecological' approach negated the hierarchical discourses of subjectivity – geared to ideas of nation, empire and modernism – that had hitherto dominated Australian art. Indeed, to many at the time his practice seemed completely alien to the discourse of art per se. However, its parallels with traditional Aboriginal art are obvious, or so it seemed to Tillers. Aboriginal art processes existing information within a self-sustaining system, called the Dreaming, which closely echoes the ecology of the place. Like Tillers, Aboriginal artists are generally faithful copyists; their art always in quotation. Tillers was particularly struck by its coincidences with conceptual art. To him these coincidences made Western Desert painting more interesting and more in the vanguard than the new-expressionism then sweeping European art, which in his mind revived old modernist practices.

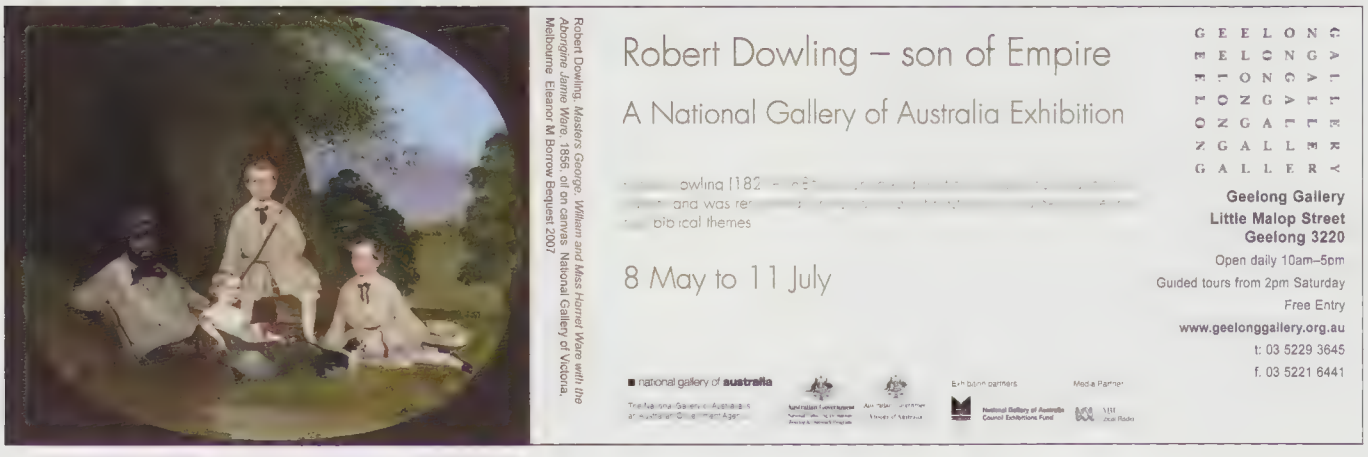
Tillers's simultaneous quotation of Tjakamarra and Baselitz put each in the same space as equals but, counter-intuitively, also asserted the avant-gardism and originality of *Five stories*. Baselitz's new-expressionist figure, cut from the cloth of an outdated modernism, is countered by an alternative Indigenous pictorial logic that, for Tillers, corresponded to the 'optical and neo-conceptual painting' then making ground in New York. It was like the digital age meeting the analogue. Tjakamarra seemed to get it: he remembers *The nine shots* as the painting in which the 'snake bitten that person' – that is, the Ancestral Rainbow Serpent biting the Baselitz figure. The 'nine postmodernist shots', as Davila called them, are Tjakamarra's circle motifs that, like targets, pin their sights on Baselitz's figure, or as Tillers said, 'like targets ... penetrating his body'. Tjakamarra fires the nine postmodernist shots at the Baselitz. In this respect, Tjakamarra, the conceptual artist, is a thinly disguised displacement of Tillers, the self-confessed 'white Aborigine'. *The nine shots* was provincialism's revenge; it pictured the death of European art. This was foremost on Tillers's mind when painting *The nine shots*. He effectively upturned the European myth of identity that had hitherto sustained the modern world and its inequities.

The nine shots was not transported to either Sydney or Venice after its showing at the Bess Cutler Gallery, but remained in New York. This is a clue to the true history of the painting. As an Australian artist, said Tillers, 'one felt that anything that you did wouldn't really register' on the international scene. Tillers felt this keenly, as he had begun to break into the international scene during the early 1980s. 1984 was to be a big year, as Tillers was booked into his first two exhibitions in New York. One was a group exhibition in spring, the other a one-person exhibition in autumn at the Bess Cutler Gallery.

In preparation for his assault on New York, Tillers decided to engage the local art scene by appropriating the new new-expressionist stars then doing a good trade, artists such as Schnabel, Salle and Baselitz. In Tillers's mind the tactic worked, for he was very pleased with the reception of his exhibition. Even the hostile review from Donald Kuspit – a prominent New York critic and champion of new-expressionism – played into his hands. Kuspit dismissed Tillers's exhibition as 'evidence of the provincial's condition', its appropriations a 'hackneyed method' 'for assimilating what one doesn't understand?' What Tillers didn't understand, said Kuspit, was the historical agency of modernism: Tillers' 'archeologising' strategy wrenched contemporary art from history. Well, exactly: this is the tactical purpose of his critical mimicry: to marginalise the monumentality of history, to mock its power as a model.

Kuspit's accusation must have struck Tillers as particularly ironic as he was acutely aware of a certain Zeitgeist then being played out around the end of modernism and its discourses of provincialism and primitivism. Tillers had been condemned to being provincial with a similar Eurocentric and colonialist logic that relegated Indigenous art to the ahistorical primitive. In this respect Kuspit's criticism mirrored the conception of MoMA's *Primitivism* exhibition, then very much in the air. *The nine shots*, conceived shortly after the publication of Kuspit's review, is Tillers's response to Kuspit.

In so explicitly picturing provincialism's revenge, *The nine shots* keyed into a foundational discourse of Australian art that had preoccupied Tillers for more than a decade. In the mid-1970s he had made a similar critique in *Conversations with the bride* (1974-5), which juxtaposed images of Hans Heysen's *Summer* (1909) – a populist image of national identity – and Marcel Duchamp's *The bride*


Robert Dowling. Masters George, William and Miss Harriet Ware with the Aborigine Jamie Ware. 1856. oil on canvas. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Eleanor M Borrow Bequest 2007
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stripped bare by her bachelors, even (1915-1923). *The nine shots*, which references the nine shots Duchamp fired with a child's toy gun at *The bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even*, effectively updated and expanded the critique to a postcolonial dimension, substituting Duchamp with Baselitz, and a seminal white Australian nationalist artist with an Indigenous one. Such are the ricochets of his inheritance. Tillers thus takes his lessons from history but as if it is a discourse that has its own history and is not a given. In unpacking this particular mirror world, *The nine shots* does what Davila later accused Tillers of ignoring: it identifies 'the borrowed fictions of our own past' that urgently need to be jettisoned.

The lesson

> White excursions onto the terrain of Aboriginal representation are now highly problematic. But they are equally imperative in order to contradict in practice the dismal doctrine that no rapprochement is possible. (Vivien Johnson, 1985)

The artworld threw up its hands in horror at Tillers's *faux pas*, then promptly proceeded to believe what *The nine shots* pictured: the contemporaneity of Western Desert art. Yet what Vivien Johnson said in 1985 (above), the year that *The nine shots* was painted, remains true today. The line between Indigenous and European art has not been erased. In calling this line into question, *The nine shots* came up against a difference buried deep in the colonial imaginary that is not easily foreclosed. Today, twenty-five years after Tillers painted *The nine shots*, Indigenous and European art each still operate in completely different zones, be it in the funding, production, marketing, curation, exhibition or critique of the work. It is as if the historical trauma of the great 'dispersal' – the colonial holocaust of genocide, land grab and enslavement – etched like a brand on the psyche of this nation, has frozen into an ontological gap that cannot be breached.

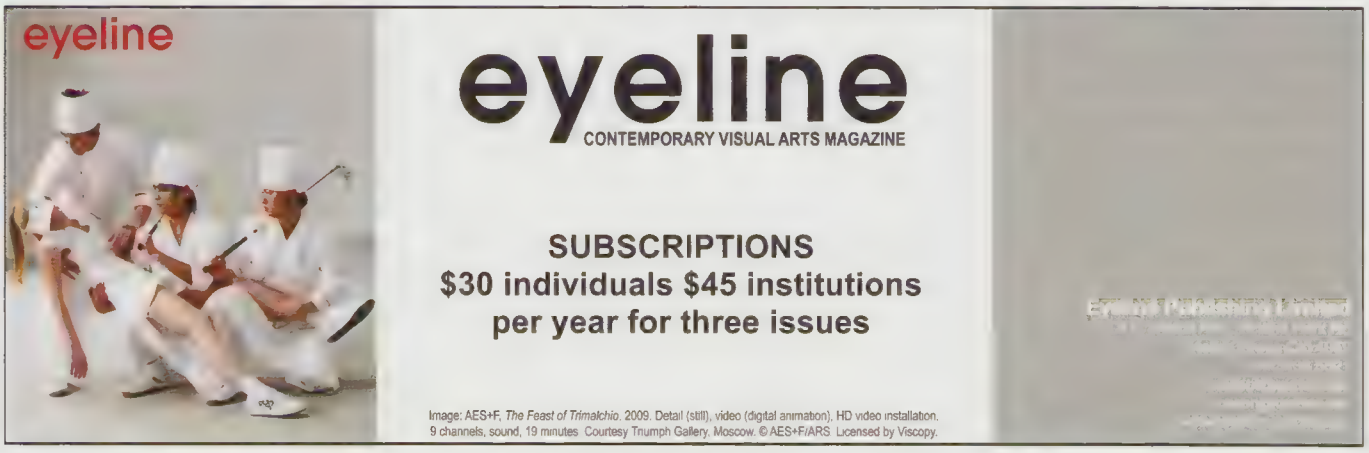
Implicit belief in the fundamental ontological difference between the two cultures persists, as if rapprochement is impossible. This belief underpinned Davila's 1987 criticism of *The nine shots* and was put more forcefully on an international stage by Ann-Marie Willis and Tony Fry a few years later. They condemned those on both sides who pushed for rapprochement, even singling out the Western Desert art movement for collaborating with the enemy. More recently, Vernon Ah Kee – an acclaimed Indigenous artist from North Queensland who represented Australia at the 2009 Venice Biennale – has continued this line of attack:

> The problem with art produced and retailed through art centres – if you want to call it art – is that the artists don't understand their role ... I'm talking about the narrow definition of Aboriginal art that the people in remote communities live up to, to their own detriment. (Vernon Ah Kee, 2008)

Ah Kee, who believes 'there are too many people who want to tap into that romantic ideal, that identity, that aesthetic', is critical of artists who use the discourses of myth to shelter from contemporary reality. While there is an obvious and pragmatic veracity to Ah Kee's point, like Davila's and Willis and Fry's criticisms, Ah Kee reiterates and so reinforces a difference that Waterlow had deliberately sought to blur in the 1986 Sydney Biennale. Not only did Tillers (along with Johnson) 'consider collaboration and rapprochement to be essential', he made the radical anti-modernist proposition that the myth of Dreaming is not an exotic ontology that needs protecting but can productively engage with the contemporary world and contemporary art practice. Tillers (and Johnson) sensed this in the formal structure of Western Desert paintings: their 'fragmented surface' evoked a similar sense of being to the optical effects of neo-conceptual art, in which identity is not centred and transcendent but labile and contingent. In short, Tillers sensed an affinity between Dreaming and the post-national postmodern contemporary, as if Dreaming's ancestral tracks are more like the air routes and electronic cables that ricochet across the world than the national borders that divide it.

Indigenous Country is not marked on those European maps of fixed national borders into which the citizen must fit its identity. Rather an Indigenous individual may have his/her own ancestral map that is constantly negotiated and redrawn as various associations come and go, ebb and flow. No wonder Tillers was attracted to Tjakamarra's *Five stories* – which is such a map of his identity – and also, at this time, to Jasper Johns's *Map* (1961), which deconstructs the firm and iconic outline of US state borders into a shifting mosaic. Similarly, in more recent times Tillers has found inspiration in the spreading labyrinthine rhizome of Emily Kngwarreye's *Big yam dreaming* (1995), which he felt 'had a strange and unexpected affinity with Jasper Johns's *Map*'. To Tillers, Western Desert paintings are not nostalgic mementoes of some romantic past but, like the work of Johns, potently image the systems of power that structure contemporary subjectivity.

When Tillers first saw an image of *Possum dreaming* (*Five stories*) in an advertisement in the 1985 winter (mid-year) issue of *Art & Australia* – with Kuspit's criticism fresh in his mind – he recognised a truthful alternative to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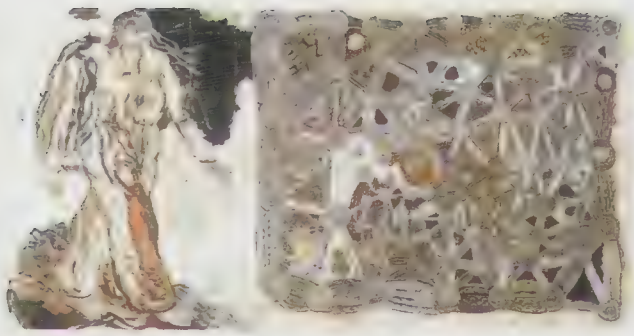

modernism or, in Kuspit's terms, another history that resonated with his post-conceptualist practice. If Tjakamarra also never doubted the truth of *Five stories*, he was as aware as Ah Kee 'that art in Western culture is a commodity, and the ... artist's role is to work within that system to create exceptional art'. Like a hunter stalking his prey, joining Papunya Tula in 1983 had been a long shot, a gamble. *The nine shots*, which like a mirror returned his recent design, was a signal that his ploy had paid off. The signal was clear: the European world is in the Dreaming. This idea is still a scandal, as the line between the two has not been erased, hardly even troubled. But if there is one lesson to be learnt from the still unfinished story of *The nine shots*, a lesson also implicit in *The nine ricochets*, it is that the closer you get the more ambivalent this line of difference becomes. It looks less like an iron curtain and more like an unmapped third space, a ternary essence of untested differences yet to be disseminated.

1. An image of *Fatherland* was reproduced in the first part of this article (AMA # 228, p. 14) however it was mistakenly attributed to Imants Tillers alone. The correct caption is: Imants Tillers and Michael Nelson Jagamara, *Fatherland*, 2008, acrylic on gouache on 90 canvasboards.

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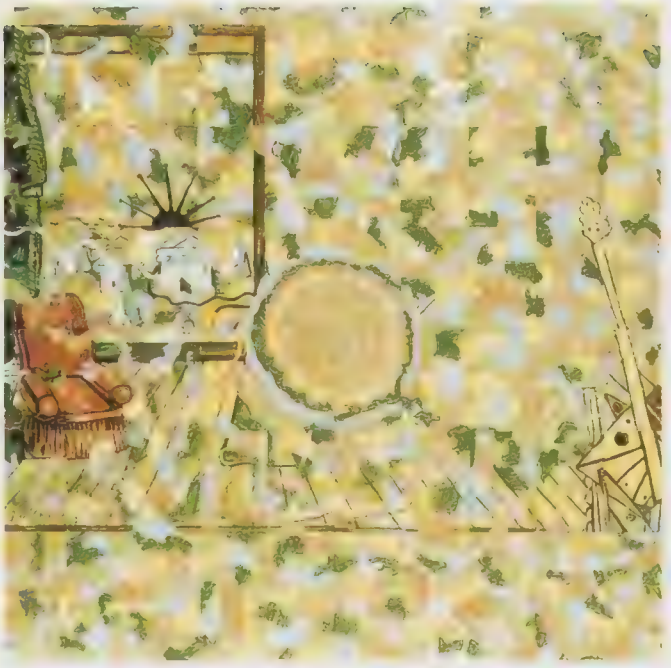

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Professor Ian McLean is Deputy Dean, Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts at the University of Western Australia. His latest publication, *How Aborigines Invented the Idea of Contemporary Art: an anthology of writing on Aboriginal art 1980-2006*, Power Publications, Sydney, and Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, is due to be released later this year.

The Quick
and the Dead

AMBER NAISMITH

It was pouring with rain on the afternoon that I visited the Ivan Dougherty Gallery to see the David Elliott curated exhibition *The Quick and the Dead,* so I wasn't surprised to find that I was the only visitor there. I was, however, grateful for the chance to experience the works on display in solitude, for they each possessed a kind of rhythmic and meditative quality that was all the more mesmerising without the distraction of others.

Taking its subject from themes of mortality, death and spirituality, the *Quick and the Dead* featured three projected masterworks, one each by Susan Hiller, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook and Bill Viola. All three artists will be represented in the 17th Sydney Biennale, of which Elliott is the Artistic Director, so this exhibition provided an exciting opportunity to gain an insight into his curatorial vision, as well as to view the artists' earlier work.

The title of the exhibition, *The Quick and the Dead*, is taken from the passage in the *King James Bible*, which states that God alone has the capacity to judge the dead as well as the living (the quick), because the spirit continues to live after death.[1] Elliot points out in his introductory essay that the title is not meant to imply a Christian intent, but rather to highlight the idea of the continuing life of the spirit, which he sees as fundamental to all beliefs. Elliott selected the works of these three artists because 'they all hint at networks of response, emotion and experience that are much greater than can ever be known or demonstrated – age-old rites of passage between life, death, spirit and art'.[2]

Susan Hiller is an installation artist who lives and works in London. Originally trained as an anthropologist as well as an artist, her work has often been described as an excavation of the overlooked.[3] Sifting through fragments, retrieving what has been discarded, reviving memories and dreams, and merging disparate languages, she has dealt with all sorts of strange and inexplicable phenomena throughout her career.

Hiller first began using sound for *Monument* (1980-81), a large-scale installation honoring Londoners who died while trying to rescue others. Through headphones, viewers hear Hiller's fragmented meditation on death, heroism, immortality, gender and representation. On the soundtrack, the artist suggests that there is an unacknowledged uncanny aspect of sound recording, which allows the dead to speak to us: 'You can think of life after death as a second life which you may enter into as a portrait or inscription, and in which you remain longer than you do in your actual living life.'

Less specific, but in a similar vein, is *Magic Lantern* (1987), shown as part of this exhibition. An audiovisual installation, it consists of three slide projectors with a synchronised soundtrack. Each carousel contains twelve

35mm slides which are driven by electronic pulses, apparently a technical device used in early scientific experiments. The repetitive, rhythmic projection of three solid discs in red, blue and yellow as they overlap and shift in scale, starts to have a definite hypnotic effect when watched solidly for twelve minutes.

The soundtrack draws on the para-psychic recordings of Konstantin Raudive, the Latvian psychologist and pioneer of the Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP). EVP refers to electronically captured sounds, which are typically static, stray radio transmissions and background noise that resemble speech. Raudive made over 100,000 recordings, which he described as communications with discarnate people, that he then invited listeners to interpret. It is these 'interpretations' that we hear over the ambient reverberation of the tapes in *Magic Lantern.* Hiller has intercut the abstract tones of her own voice into these recordings. Re-dubbed over and over, they begin to create their own polyphonic harmony. As both the sound and image faded away, I was left with the after-burn of the last yellow disc on my retina, and a disquieting feeling that made me consider the artist's interest in the relationship between altered states of consciousness and art practice.

From the mid-1990s Chiang Mai-based visual artist Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook has been constructing video installations and objects that question our perceptions about life, death and the spirit. In an earlier work, *Reading for Three*

Female Corpses (1997), she reads poems to three women who had passed away and had no family to look after them. This piece formed the beginning of a long series of works with corpses that investigate death, rituals and mourning.

Conversation 1 (2005) is part of this continuing devotion. Continually looped video footage of the artist walking through a morgue to read and sing to corpses uniformly covered in white sheets is projected on five screens. The artist moves insouciantly in and out of frame, entering each new screen and often featuring in all simultaneously. The textures, lighting and composition of the images have an understated elegance and simplicity; however the artist does not consider the video to be her artwork. She sees it rather as a device in which to document the act of consoling and communing with the souls of the deceased. The artwork itself exists in the action and of the connection made between the artist and the spirits of the dead.[4] By reading and singing to them, she felt that there was a 'communication' between her and her memories of loss ... that helped her to see that life is not permanent.[5]

Rasdjarmrearnsook has said that she hoped to offer respect and dignity to the recently deceased, and sought a return to purer values by removing elaborate funeral ceremonies.

> Simple acts of one living person, dressing, reading and telling stories and singing traditional Thai songs to the dead bodies, cut straight to the close ties that do exist between the living and the dead. In reality, life and death should not be understood as opposites. People deal with death by trying to hide it. They hide death behind ritual or hope to prevent it with medicine. I want people to have more imagination and confront reality![6]

With these images, the artist elides the differences between existence and non-being, making the point that what is important in life is not bound by flesh and that the idea of human transience is in itself banal. A very quiet work, Rasdjarmrearnsook's imagery is contemplative, questioning, illuminating and provocative.

Bill Viola has been exploring the limits of video since the dawn of the medium and is now internationally recognised as one of its most important exponents. He has been remarkably steadfast in his artistic explorations; universal human consciousness has been the focus of his work for over thirty-five years. Viola deals largely with central themes of human experience: life, birth, death, rebirth, love and emotion. Inspired by the Zen writings and artistic influences that transpired in America in the 1970s, Viola went to Japan in 1981 as part of a cultural scholarship. It was then that he created the single-channel video *Hatsu-Yume (First Dream)* (1981).

In Japanese culture 'Hatsu-Yume' refers to the widely held belief that dreams remembered on the first night of the year foretell the future. Viola uses this as a starting point to explore the shifting planes of perception expressed through a multi-person journey or rite of passage. The camera eye takes us on a visual journey through the landscape of Japan. After the deluge of a rainstorm on a windshield, the speckled scales of fish appear rippling under the surface of the water, from the rural areas of the north to the nocturnal underworld of Tokyo city. The work is structured on the cycle of one day – the dividing line of light and darkness – and of ancient to new; nature and city. The piece works as a spiritual allegory equating light and dark with life and death.

There is an enduring view of nature and the universe that undoubtedly has Japan at its heart, though Elliott also likens its poetic scope to primordial creation myths and the symbolically charged landscapes of Aboriginal Dreamtimes.[7] The cycles of life and nature, the resurrection that follows the deluge, it is these images that evoke the power and wonder of hope and the infinite possibility of the future.

Moving between stillness and motion, silence and sound, nature and civilisation, we frequently can't tell if the streams of image and sound are unfolding in real-time, slow-motion or time-lapse. Viola's use of extreme slow-motion creates an altered consciousness, a kind of suspended time. I found this work to be visually stunning with a masterful and painterly use of light. Spiritual, calming and mysterious, the piece's power lies not in its technical perfection, though its sophisticated use of the technology of the time is remarkable.

Since creating this piece, Bill Viola has continued to explore the threshold between life and death, perhaps more explicitly than in *Hatsu-Yume*. Viola's installation, *Ocean without a shore* (2007), on display at the National Gallery of Victoria concurrently with this exhibition, is emblematic of his considered attention to human beings undergoing various states of transformation and renewal.[8]

From a curatorial framework, the *Quick and the Dead* didn't initially strike me as bold. It didn't immediately confront or provoke a reaction from its audience. Instead I found the exhibition as a whole to be calming, meditative and deeply spiritual. These works provoke the mind to avenues of contemplation and self-discovery. Elliott intended an exhibition to explore the significance of ideas of transcendence in modern and contemporary art and for me at least, the works here provided an experience that can only be described as transcendent.

1. *The Holy Bible, King James Version*, 1604-1611. First Epistle of Saint Peter, Chapter 4, Verses 3-6.

2. David Elliott, Introductory Essay for *The Quick and the Dead: Rites of Passage in Art, Spirit and Life*, exhibition catalogue published by Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 2009.

3. Barbara Einzeg, *Thinking about Art: Conversations with Susan Hiller*, 1996.

4. Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, Artist Bio, Carnegie International.

5. As above.

6. Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook as quoted in Brian Curtin, *Confronting Confrontation: An interview with Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook*, magazine.art-signal.com

7. Elliot, 2009.

8. Bill Viola's *Ocean without a Shore* (2007) is now part of the permanent collection at the National Gallery of Victoria.

The Quick and the Dead, Rites of Passage in Art, Spirit and Life, curated by David Elliot, was shown at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts 28 May to 27 June 2009. David Elliot is the Artistic Director for the 17th Biennale of Sydney, 12 May to 1 August 2010.

Amber Naismith is a film producer at Animal Logic in Sydney and currently studying a Masters in Arts Administration at the College of Fine Arts, University of NSW, Sydney.

Beauty:
nature and art

MARK DOBER

Beauty pervades our consciousness. It has been said that beauty is love; the English poet John Keats wrote that beauty was truth. Today we are inclined to say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

For beauty is not a thing – a shared property or characteristic which beautiful things have in their possession. Beauty can best be regarded a fluid concept, caught as it is in a tension between the subjective (personal taste) and the social (a context which works to structure and shape our individual responses).

'Beauty cannot do without man,' wrote Nobel Prize-winning French author, Albert Camus. He continued:

> (for) ...The beautiful is not in Nature; it is we who put it there. The sense of beauty we feel before a landscape does not come from the landscape's aesthetic perfection. It comes from the fact that the look of things is in perfect agreement with our instincts, our propensities, with everything that makes up our unconscious personality ... the greater part of an aesthetic emotion is therefore produced by ourselves ...[1]

Camus regarded beauty as a kind of medium by which humanity could develop an intimate relationship with nature and bond with 'her'. This bonding may invoke a sense of oneness between viewer and nature, a not uncommon experience when contemplating a rugged coastline of cliffs and crashing waves, for instance, or mountain ranges receding into the blue distance, or a night sky filled with stars. At such times, it may seem that the viewer ceases to stand at the centre of their own world, and encounters a sense of being privilege to the experience of a greater whole, or another realm. This can be refreshing and liberating – to feel less burdened by immediate concerns as a result of feeling more connected to the larger scheme of things. It is in the nature of such an experience that this beauty reveals a world more picture-perfect and more desirable than our everyday reality.

We can also find pleasure, happiness and escape within a more familiar world closer to home: the flowers in a backyard garden, a friend's smile, a child sleeping. Yet it may be thought that beauty can be a distraction from an appreciation of real-life concerns. Everyday experience, the ordinary things of life, might be seen to be devalued by too great a focus on the beautiful. There is another way of looking at this – that beauty can be a form of protest against alienation and ugliness and an antidote to morbidity and evil in the world. Beauty can suggest hope.

Camus thought so. In his novel *The Plague* (1947), the narrator and his companion go for a night swim in the Mediterranean, a canopy of stars overhead. In this moment of transcendent beauty nature presents a reprise from the relentless plague and the ongoing state of despair that has gripped the stricken Algerian town of Oran.[2] You sense that the everlasting beauty represented by sea and sky will win out in the end. Beauty is seen as a reminder of a universal human hope, as the opposite of death.

Camus believed that beauty rewards us with a sense of the dignity of life. This was a quality to be prized in what he believed to be a random universe with no obvious purpose for humanity. Beauty is seen as a source of inspiration for it generates feelings of appreciation and even love for life and the world itself. Beauty is a celebration of being.

You might expect that if the beauty we experience in nature is a visual experience that offers so much, then beauty would also feature in the visual arts: a prime opportunity for culture to acknowledge and celebrate the beautiful. And I do think that there is much beauty to be experienced from looking at today's art – perhaps no less so than for the art of the past.

Indeed, in today's art world there appears to be a growing interest in acknowledging the beautiful. The current 17th Biennale of Sydney is titled *The Beauty of Distance*. From its website publicity, it would seem that beauty in art is being conflated with celebration and expression. The site also goes on to say that 'beauty in art (is) a resolution of energy, thought and feeling in aesthetic form'.

But for the avant-garde in the visual arts to sponsor an interest in beauty is a relatively recent phenomenon. Until recently, beauty has scarcely been acknowledged in arts writing and has rarely been the subject of discussion in art reviews and journal articles.[3] While words like 'beautiful' have been used to indicate the visual appeal of a particular work or body of work, how this beauty has been manifested and what it might mean has been little analysed and talked about. Beauty has not been thought to have a content – to offer meaning – in its own right.

How is it that beauty in art can be neglected? It may be that beauty is felt to be too subjective to constitute a meaningful part of an art argument of any kind. Valued, certainly, but because of the vagueness surrounding its constituent properties, beauty may not be thought of as particularly ripe for inquiry but rather as an appealing gloss – a kind of 'hook' – to attract attention and sales. The real content is seen to lie elsewhere.

It is also likely that discussion about beauty in art arouses suspicions and is regarded as a risky subject, prone to lapse into sentimentality or conservative thinking. In the visual arts beauty can be seen as promoting a false view of the world – a distraction from unpalatable realities which a healthy and vital culture should acknowledge. It may be felt that beauty in art fosters a delusion that encourages complacency and self-satisfaction.[4] And there is the larger problem in our visual culture where beauty is contrived for commercial and manipulative purposes, a form of commodity and calculation. Beauty is seen to be tied up with design, style and marketing.

In art beauty runs the risk of all the above, particularly where it degenerates into kitsch, cliché or a kind of lazy decoration. But space for a genuine and 'innocent' beauty remains. Indeed, beauty can give to art an intrinsic vitality and appeal. There is no need to dismiss sensuous beauty as emotionally and intellectually lightweight or inherently conservative. In art of depth and quality beauty can be much more than eye candy or an escape from the 'real'. On the other hand, there is no necessity for beauty to be put on a distancing pedestal, as if only belonging to the ideal or imaginary (a tendency often associated with the pre-modern past). Beauty is embedded

in the very fabric of existence, in the minutiae of life, not just in the exceptional and the grand idea. Perhaps in learning to appreciate beauty again we must be prepared to do without the kind of cultural authority that it once wielded a hundred years ago and more. ■

1. Albert Camus, 'Creation and Revolution', from *The Rebel*, 1962 edition. Reprinted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art and Theory 1900 – 1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, p. 618.

2. Albert Camus, *The Plague*, Penguin, English edition, London, 1948, pp. 209-210.

3. An exception in recent times was an edition of *Artlink* magazine titled *art, mind beauty*, Vol 28, no 2, June 2008. Another recent publication reveals the growing interest in beauty as a subject of inquiry in contemporary art: Dave Beech (ed.), *Beauty (Documents in Contemporary Art series)*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 2009.

4. The Melbourne University based philosopher John Armstrong promotes a view which might be seen to fall into this trap. In his 2004 book, *The Secret Power of Beauty*, Armstrong leans towards defining beauty in idealising, classical terms: 'the things associated with beauty ... (are) majesty, serenity, order.' (p. 137.) But beauty need not be viewed as independent of and 'above' the social and political dimensions to life – as a cultural phenomenon it is woven into the very fabric of our social selves.

Mark Dober has a PhD in Fine Art (Painting) from Monash University. He is a freelance art writer and practising artist (painter) and lives in Melbourne.

Julia Morison [illegible] #6 Wayzgoose, C[illegible]uration #4, 2010, laser jet print, Indian

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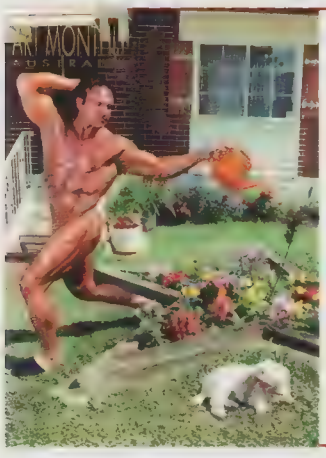

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Melbourne><Brisbane: punk, art and after

ASHLEY CRAWFORD

the time. Lines were blurred. Definitions demolished. Bands were formed. Independent galleries established. Manifestos and magazines were published. It was the early '80s, a time of do-it-yourself mayhem. Artists would crowd gigs by The Birthday Party and The Go-Betweens and rock musicians would attend openings at Art Projects.

While this was, to varying degrees, a national phenomenon, a strange and potent dialogue opened up between two cities. Brisbane was the birthplace of Australian punk, a city that spawned the soon to be world-famous The Saints and, soon after, The Go Betweens. Melbourne saw the emergence of Nick Cave and The Birthday Party alongside numerous other bands. This new musical scene was co-joined by a new generation of visual artists who added to the clamor with noise and artworks of their own.

This, at heart, is the premise of *Melbourne><Brisbane: punk, art and after*, an exhibition that traces the extraordinary merger of the alternative music and art scenes between Melbourne and Brisbane during the punk and post-punk years, 1975-85.

Curated by Brisbane-based David Pestorius, the show aims to illustrate the history of artistic and musical interaction between the two cities through music, film, ephemeral publications, street posters, photographs and paintings by artists including Howard Arkley, Tony Clark, Brett Colquhuon, Peter Cripps, John Nixon, Peter Tyndall and Jenny Watson, bands such as The Saints, The Go-Betweens, The Birthday Party and the Laughing Clowns, but also the artist bands of Anti-Music collective and the Little Bands scene.

For Pestorius the gallery and gig crossover allowed the 'formation of a postmodern avant-garde, joining clusters of artists united by location, friendship, shared experience and interests'.

Pestorius himself started out as an amateur photographer, leading him to taking band photos, initially while at high school in Sydney, then in Brisbane. 'The Brisbane punk scene was intense and I still have clear memories of Gary Warner's Super 8 projections at gigs', he says. 'That really hit me. Gary was a real pioneer of the music/art crossover here.' Pestorius was also in a short-lived guitar duo with artist Eugene Carchesio in 1980.

In Melbourne it was not uncommon to see the cream of Australia's young avant-garde artists at gigs at such inauspicious spaces as St. Kilda's Seaview Ballroom. Nixon, Clark, Watson, Arkley, Colquhoun, Greg Ades, Megan Bannister and Peter Walsh, amongst others, were regulars.

Nixon had started his alternative Art Projects gallery in 1979 but in 1980 he handed the reigns to Peter Tyndall to take over as director of Brisbane's Institute of Modern Art for two years. In many respects Nixon and his then partner Jenny Watson became the Melbourne-Brisbane bridge. Watson would go on to execute the cover of The Go Betweens' *Send Me A Lullaby* album.

A number of the artists, Nixon, Clark and Tyndall especially, also attempted to cross over into the music/sound art realm with live performances and recordings.

'This crossover was substantially one way', Pestorius says.

> Artists crossing over into the world of rock 'n' roll, creating bands and looking for new audiences and contexts outside the gallery system. Basically, this was a product of conceptual art and punk in the '70s. There were a number of common traits. However, there were musicians who went the other way, and you're right to identify The Go-Betweens here. Forster and McLennan envisaged the band as a multi-dimensional enterprise. Sure, making records and performing live was the main game, but they also made films, wrote about film, they wrote poetry, they had their own small label with a curated program, and planned a specialist music zine. They may not have had exhibitions, but they collaborated with artists, including John Nixon, Jenny Watson and Philip Brophy, on what were clearly art projects in the early '80s ... Whether you see it as "making visual art as such", I don't know. They certainly didn't play it by the rules of rock 'n' roll, which are much more firmly fixed in place than those of the highly institutionalised world of art.

Pestorius, who has worked with Robert Forster several times over the years, says he still operates like this today. 'His recent book (*The Ten Rules of Rock 'n' Roll)* is a kind of summary of his attitude to a whole raft of institutional conventions.'

Pestorius has trawled numerous personal and institutional archives to collate the show which reflects the grungy, DIY approach of the day replete with thirty-year-old Polaroids in remarkably good condition (Pestorius claims 'they'll steal the show') and photocopied manifestos. The result is a stunning mélange of things long thought lost, resurrected from boxes beneath beds and hidden in wardrobes; copies of the magazines *Pulp*, *Roadrunner*, *Virgin Press*, *Fast Forward*, *Tension* and *Art & Text*; original seven-inch singles from The Saints, Whirleywirld, The Tuff Monks, The Primitive Calculators; posters for gigs in punk locales long gone. The list is exhaustive and reflects both a passionate, personal interest and a rigorous academic zeal. Pestorius rejects outright the suggestion that his exhibition is nostalgic, pointing out its present-day continuities.

> Robert Forster is perhaps the best case in point here, and the exhibition includes a substantial focus on his music/art activities in the '90s too. The exhibition also revisits a recent international project, which saw Ed Kuepper perform live scores for short video films by major contemporary artists, including Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Liam Gillick and Heimo Zobernig, to name just a few. Tony Clark was also involved in that.

As for the look of the show, 'I would describe the aesthetic broadly as counter-institutional,' Pestorius says.

> In this regard, I was very pleased the museum agreed that an artist (Nixon) be commissioned to work with me on the design of the exhibition ... [which] will no doubt reflect his 'back-to-basics' material aesthetic ... There will be a lot of wall texts, more than usual, with different levels of information, which is designed to build the historical context, but also a degree of reflexivity in the situation too. It will be a little bit like walking into a three-dimensional collage.

The American cultural critic Greil Marcus, in his book *Lipstick Traces*, charted a genealogy from such movements as Dada and the Situationists through to Punk. Pestorius believes a not dissimilar vein runs through the late '70s and early '80s in the Brisbane/Melbourne nexus.

> I think it's fair to say that the Melbourne punk scene derived great inspiration from The Saints, but not just on account of the international DIY success they achieved with the 'Stranded' single, but because of the Realpolitik that was driving them. The context of Brisbane punk was a genuine critical updating of Dada. Of course, to compare the situation here to the carnage of The Great War may now seem ridiculous, but it should never be forgotten that Brisbane was an ugly conservative place in the late '70s and early '80s.

Pestorius readily acknowledges there were many equivalent moments involving other cities around the country. He also cites earlier trans-local art/rock music histories involving Brisbane and Melbourne artists and musicians, with various coloured balls of Clive Murray White and Lobby Loyde, The Purple Hearts, and the Wild Cherries worth exploring. But Pestorius strongly believes that the exchange and collaboration between artists and musicians in the two cities during the punk and post punk years was particularly significant.

> What started it off? I think The Saints coming down to Melbourne in early 1977 was very important to it all. So too was John Nixon moving to Brisbane in early 1980. Missing Link Records, the punk zine *Pulp*, *Fast Forward*, Art Projects, and the IMA were key contexts, with there being many push and pull factors. ■

Melbourne><Brisbane: punk, art and after, curated by David Pestorius, is showing at The Ian Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne, 23 February to 16 May 2010. www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au

Ashley Crawford is a freelance writer based in Melbourne and the editor of *Photofile* magazine.

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Hopper's
Imaginary Line

MELISSA AMORE

Many actors are slaves to the notion of Hollywood, becoming puppets to the multiple characters they play. They cultivate personas to make their fictional characters more believable, and countless become psychologically affected by the transition on and off film. Dennis Hopper appears to be no stranger to this concurrent interplay of roles. In constant switch, from actor, filmmaker, social activist, to photographer and painter, Hopper has lived many lives on and off film. He often blurs his own imaginary line between fact and fiction.

This significant international exhibition, *Dennis Hopper and The New Hollywood*, exposes a Hollywood in the midst of transformation, turmoil, interrogation and revolution. The exhibition, originally curated by Matthieu Orléan from the Cinémathèque in Paris, marks powerful connections to Hopper's artistic career, collaborations and interactions. Hopper shares with us his metaphysical view of man and existence. As Serge Toubiana, director of the Cinémathèque in Paris, states in the catalogue essay: 'As an actor, Hopper spent half a century in movies and has become a living legend. In him one can see the two faces of Hollywood and the two phases of its existence.'

Hopper's transitional faces are projected over four rooms, unveiling the true maverick behind the lens. 'Hopper is the man who took the risk of not setting up fiction against reality, or art against cinema, chaos against peace,' says Orléan. 'He is the man who, through his photographs and films, has remorselessly tracked down the enigma that lies behind the American paradox, both as a spiritual exercise and as sociological testimony of the changes to this country.'

The exhibition features an impressive compilation of 230 works across all creative mediums from many of the world's highly acclaimed abstract expressionists, pop and conceptual artists, including Andy Warhol, Bruce Connor, Ed Ruscha, Jasper Johns, Franz Kline, George Herms, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Jenny Holzer and Julian Schnabel. The sheer scale of this exhibition unfolds like a Hollywood performance, cultivating an immersive space of sound and vision.

The exhibition entertains the dialectic of order and chaos, of industry and of myth. Hopper's enigmatic voice as narrator in the mini-film *I Remember*, and the comical Duchampian inspired readymade sign, *Hotel Green (Entrance)* (1963), escorts the audience through the exhibition. Segmented in five thematic stages: On The Edge of Hollywood, The Myths of the New Hollywood, Leaving Hollywood, Los Angeles: The True Face of Hollywood and Exploding Hollywood, Hopper's audience trace a history back to the 1960s.

A new social order dawned on America with a presidential shift from Eisenhower to a dynamic John F. Kennedy, elected in 1961. Often referred to as the 'New Wave' or the 'Hollywood Renaissance', directors turned their backs on conventional filming methods and embraced new ways of creating. As a generation of young filmmakers toyed with this line of creative control, a conflict between the old and new worlds was breeding.

Indeed, Hopper was a social rebel and his contribution to the counter-culture voice, projected in the 1960s, commanded attention. During this period a new wave of filmmakers such as Francis Ford Coppola, William Friedkin, Phillip Kaufman, Stanley Kubrick, Roman Polanski and Martin Scorsese were pushing boundaries.

Heavily influenced by the Italian/European and Japanese cinema, Hopper's experimental film *Easy Rider* (1969), co-written with Peter Fonda, made claim to this new spirit of image making. 'With its super low budget and rock'n'roll soundtrack, Hopper's directional debut quickly reached cult status,' writes Tony Sweeney, director of the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI):

> The aesthetic of the road, already mythologised by the New York beats in the 1950s, took on new connotations in the Californian underground, mingling with aspects of Pop Art, radical politics and the great mythology of the American dream.

Dennis Hopper and the New Hollywood brings together a multitude of voices. Hopper's vision both as actor and director is seen in many iconic films, including *Basquiat* (1996), *Easy Rider* (1969), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Colours* (1988), *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), *The Australian Mad Dog Morgan* (1976), and *Blue Velvet* (1986).

Hopper marks a story of civilisation and his personal

egan Cadd
200 years ago (detail)

Winyarr-Ngu-Bala
Aboriginal Women Give To You
Curated by Megan Cadd
19 May – 5 June 2010
Artists include [illegible] Megan Cadd [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

MANNINGHAM Gallery
MANNINGHAM

collection of works becomes a strong bridge to his own artistic faces. 'I wanted to link all aspects of Hopper's life, to unveil the inner subject,' Orléan remarks.[1] Hopper's own works line the walls alongside such poignant images from major art figures. Julian Schnabel's fragmented portrait of Hopper is a testimony to the calibre of works on display.

Schnabel's trademark plate painting of Hopper ironically imprisons the inner torment of Hopper's personal life. Hopper and Schnabel forged a strong friendship through various projects including Schnabel's 1996 film *Basquiat*, based on the life of American expressionist Jean-Michel Basquiat and in which Hopper played an art dealer, Bruno Bischofber. Indeed, it is fair to acknowledge both of Schnabel's portraits (in celluloid and paint) as intimate and 'true' representations of Hopper.

Hopper's glossy *Billboard Factory* (*Multi Image of a Woman's Face*) (1964/2000) exudes another glimpse into the facade of Hopper's fantastical life on film, the imagined life. Bruce Connor's etching, *The Dennis Hopper One Man Show* (*No. 1*) (1973), is a surreal maelstrom, clearly representing Hopper's illusionary and psychological state of being. Here, Connor enters Hopper's unconscious, depicting a world of destruction, suffering and delusion.

The eminent American pop artist Andy Warhol also conveys Hopper's multiple shades of colour, in his mass-produced style, in the 1971 silkscreen Hopper portraits. Pictured almost identical to Warhol's famous Marilyn Monroe portraits, Hopper is framed as a cult celebrity icon.

Hopper's *The Kennedy Suite* (*Kennedy Funeral on Television*) (1963) also interrogates the idea of mass production and capitalism. Hopper photographed the projected TV images of the assassination aftermath. This

latin print
© Dennis Hopper

work is a political rebellion against the media's indulgent and over-saturated commercial coverage of the Kennedy funeral.

Hopper's vision cultivated a new way of seeing. 'He wanted to show the reality of the time,' Orléan says. 'He wanted to unveil the truth.' Armed with his camera Hopper was a documentary-style photographer. He entered the slums of Los Angeles and New York to unveil the hidden torture in everyday life. From recording the events in Alabama of Martin Luther King Jr in 1965, during the famous Selma march for civil rights, to shooting the victims of Hollywood, Hopper presents us with a perplexing narrative.

Hopper's subjects somewhat mirror Hopper himself. His presence appears captive in the faces of his portraits. He has photographed numerable artists, musicians, actors and filmmakers. Images including Paul Newman, Jane Fonda, Bill Crosby and artists Ed Ruscha, Wallace Berman, James Rosenquist, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Mapplethorpe, also glimpse into Hopper's own history.

Hopper's confronting self-portrait, *Within a man of light, there is only light; Within a man of darkness, there is only darkness* (1997), depicts a man overshadowed and blinded by a strange light. His dual presence is featured as a faceless silhouette. This work makes you question whether Hopper survives only through the roles he plays. His creative outputs could well be the voice to his inner subject.

Introduced to the abstract expressionists through actor Vincent Price, Hopper's own attempt can be seen in many works including *New York, (UFO)* (1996), *Morocco (Drip Painting)* (1996), *Untitled (Indian Collage)* (1982), and *Florence (Yellow Square)* (1996). This latter work, reminiscent of Latvian-born American painter Mark Rothko's compositions, exudes a dramatic departure from his Jackson Pollock inspired *Morocco* work. Again, this work is indicative of Hopper's transitional states of being. The layered strokes of colour represent a marking of time.

A clip from the film *Backtrack* (1990, released as *Catchfire*) could also be exposing the 'true' Hopper. In this film, he plays a distant art collector contemplating works resembling Jenny Holzer's famous words in light installations, on display in an art gallery. There is a strong narration between *Backtrack* and Jenny Holzer's *Purple, Blue, Arno, Erlauf* (2007) installation in the exhibition. Holzer's use of text in light is a powerful representation of the human condition and delves into our predisposition to an embodied language.

Hopper's continual search seems to question and interrogate the very notion and delivery of language. Experimenting with a magnitude of artistic tongues his voice has reached an expansive audience. This exhibition undoubtedly links a myriad of communicative artistic vocabularies; its sheer collaboration of both meditated and real spaces leaves the viewer in constant transition, not quite sure whether they're entering Hopper's fictitious realm or real happenings.

Hopper's own artworks by no means push conceptual or intellectual boundaries. Yet they distill and project a visual awareness to a time of self-reflection.

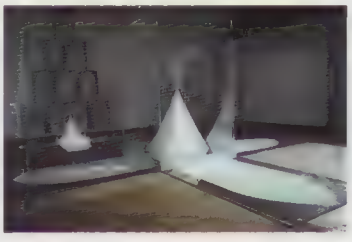
Hopper appears to be continually transforming, pushing boundaries and searching for new light. Whether through his own brush, camera or directorship, he has helped carve the world we live in today. 'He wanted to interpret the Hollywood canvas,' Orléan remarks. 'He wanted to change the way we make movies and create his own society of production. He is a chameleon and a polymorphic artist.' With his savage strength, Hopper will continue to explore new ways of seeing and being.

1. Melissa Amore, Interview with Matthieu Orléan, January 2009. Unless otherwise stated, all comments from Orléan in this article relate to this interview.

Dennis Hopper and The New Hollywood, curated by Matthieu Orléan, was exhibited at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, 12 November 2009 to 25 April 2010. www.acmi.net.au

Melissa Amore is an independent writer and curator based in Melbourne.

trigger image



Albert Tucker:

The Intruder – The Perfect Allegory

IVAN DURRANT

I've always felt that the parrot is a ready-made symbol. They have marvellous plumage that changes as they grow. The crimson rosellas begin life with olive-green and red feathers, turning crimson and electric blue as adults. The claws that tear and the beak that rips in the middle of the colours of paradise stand as a marvellous allegory – heaven and hell incorporated in the one natural form – beautiful but murderous inside – a conflict between destruction and creation.
(Albert Tucker)

Barbara Tucker at her St Kilda home, downing a wholesome vegetable-packed beef soup cooked for four hours, served in a hand-crafted, glaze-painted casserole dish by John Olsen inscribed 'to Bert' – a splash of Pizzini merlot (I did bring something) – mine poured in a terracotta and peacock blue John Perceval goblet; Barbara's a rather more fancy Martin Boyd one. The ghost of Eltham-loving, mud-brick Alistair Knox and Clifton Pugh, followed by his companion wombat, floated through the room. Sometimes life is just great.

In front of me, over Barbara's shoulder, hung the most astonishingly strong, scary, 'attacking' painting I have ever seen: *Cannibal Pearce,* painted in 1968 by Albert Tucker. And there, bang in the middle, was a parrot – more like a killer or vulture than a colourful seedeater.

What gives with Bert and his parrots, Barbara?

Well, just after we shifted to our bush paradise in Hurstbridge in the early '60s, Bert nursed a rosella back to health after it had flown into a window. As he released it. the darn thing turned around, looked him straight in the eye, sunk its beak into his finger drawing blood, and then just flew off. Bert wasn't at all upset: 'We're in its territory. The Australian bush is dangerous and if you intrude, you've got to expect trouble sometimes.' Very Buddhist. I think that's the philosophy Bert adopted through life: struggling through a dangerous world with many obstacles, but never daunted, never resentful. It gave him enormous courage to continue speaking out – painting so boldly.

Saying goodbye, Barbara handed me an unpublished and very personal statement of Bert's view on the world. Two quotes helped me understand more fully his powerful

Cannibal Pearce painting – its poetry:

With an infinite arrogance and bottomless greed we have declared war on every other life form on this planet. Crocodiles, tigers and snakes are gentlemen compared to us.

What was once a human population has now the status of a planetary plague – that is the general picture.

Cannibal Pearce – Alexander Pearce, that is, a twice-escaped convict in Van Diemen's Land – was hanged and his body dismembered by direction of the Bench in 1824. His first escape attempt ended up with his four companions being brutally axed to death by each other and eaten, due to their inability to find food in the rugged Tasmanian wilderness. Pearce was the last man standing. Escaping a second time, he took another companion merely as food-on-the-go, a sort of portable pantry. After consuming his victim, he was captured still with a large stock of flour, pork, and other food items. As he admitted, he'd become addicted to the taste of human flesh.

Pearce, as painted by Albert Tucker, is the summary of all and more that is bad in humans. He is the ultimate destructive intruder, willing to destroy any life form for his own benefit. Just look at those viciously protruding, cutting and slicing shark teeth; what a brutal axe-head, alien-

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monster – the devil himself!

The parrot, clawing into Pearce's neck, with its crab-spider, knife-edged toes and exaggerated tearing-ripping eagle beak, amplifies the utterly destructive force of Cannibal Pearce. When he stepped into the Australian bush, every inch of ground reeked as tainted beyond repair. Nature will die the most horrible of deaths if we also kill the planet for our lust and greed.

Cannibal Pearce looms as one of the most powerful and thought provoking images in Australian art. When Bert was on the warpath and painted something, it stayed painted. He walked the walk as well as talked the talk: Barbara had such a glowing smile and sparkling eyes when telling me that two large areas of Queensland rainforest that Bert had purchased to keep pristine are now included in the protected state forest.

I was so taken with *Cannibal Pearce* and Bert's approach to life that it just blurted out:

> Barbara, you must let me curate a show around Bert's paintings.
>
> OK, they're at your disposal.

At first, it was instant excitement and pure joy, that buzz I always get when discovering a new subject to explore with my own work. Yes, it was Albert Tucker's discovery, but I knew he wanted me to share it – help give it another spin. All artists are show-offs: there's no comfort in just knowing something, the real thrill is sharing the knowledge.

That day at Barbara's I'd connected with Bert, I understood his poetry. It's as if we were identical twins. There I was, inside his head; back in the sixties chatting while he was painting. I even offered advice. He forgave me, smiled and painted on. Who said time travel doesn't exist: it does with art.

So for the next few months, I hunted through hundreds of Tucker paintings, looking for a concrete theme. Fortunately, Barbara Tucker and Heide Museum of Modern Art lent me well-catalogued CDs of their collections. It wasn't a matter of choosing the best, it was more like 'how the hell do I leave so many masterpieces out?' – they're all fantastic. So I consulted 'Yoda' ... Emptying my head, I flipped through the images for another three weeks, and 'let the force be with me'. A particular mood became glaringly obvious. I'd found what made Bert really tick. Burt had worked me over; in fact, he may have even made the final selection: eighteen masterpieces – fourteen from the collection of Barbara Tucker, three from Heide Museum of Modern Art, and one from the National Gallery of Victoria. Five minutes looking at these will change you forever.

Faun and Parrot (1964), almost a companion piece to

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Cannibal Pearce, blew me away. Not just paint this time, Bert had glued rough, paint-covered tweed material to form the shoulders of the faun, and lovingly, but violently, constructed the monster parrot's wings from real feathers: twenty, in fact. He'd really pushed the allegory this time with such a desperate and successful mixture of beauty and destruction. An opalised slash of peacock blue and turquoise-speckled light embroidered the parrot's body, and the dazzling ultramarine blue and occasional pink and dappled feathers were irresistible. It's an instant trap for young players: so unbearably attractive you just have to go in for a close look. Once you're inside, you'll be taken.

In my opinion *Explorer 1* (1965) is the greatest painting Tucker ever produced. This Jesus-like, but very Australian figure, hovers between growing out of the landscape and being once free, but now anchored down by his invading environment. The explorer's chiselled, bark tree-trunk head is Tucker's ultimate iconic Antipodean bushman, reminiscent in a way of Nolan's symbolic black Ned Kelly mask: Nolan's more abstract and whimsical, where Tucker's is more personal, more agonising, and more representative of human struggles.

This explorer is our saviour, dying on the cross, taking on our struggles so that we may understand nature and bend with it, to live a better life in harmony with our world. Flashy, squawking, surreal Pac-man parrots darting through the sky like frenzied flying fish, give a deep sense of menace to the explorer's world. They're lures, flying deliberately and relentlessly, ready to catch their barbed beaks on any bit of unwary, exposed flesh. Yes, Bert, I get the picture. Keep your eyes out for danger: it's always present.

Albert Tucker lived poor for many years, travelled Europe towing a tiny, homemade, one-man caravan, yet never once faltered in his dedication to explore and explain life with his art. He was as game as they come, sticking to what was then an unfashionable genre – as game as Burke and Wills.

The exhibition, *The Intruder – The Perfect Allegory,* explores Tucker's most personal poetry: the haunting and conflicting images of the dangers of the Australian bush, menacing yet beautiful parrots, and the life and death struggles of explorers and human intruders; while alluding to Tucker's broader view of his struggles, our struggles, and the ability to find beauty and meaning no matter what obstacles confront us. Life can be very tough, but we must absorb the blows and bend with it. Only with that understanding will we see the gems.

Albert Tucker: The Intruder – The Perfect Allegory, curated by Ivan Durrant, was first exhibited at Benalla Art Gallery from 1 June to 10 August 2009, and also shown at Ararat Art Gallery, 10 September to 18 October 2009.

Ivan Durrant has been a full-time artist since 1968, working in painting, sculpture, performance art, film and writing. His touring solo exhibition *Boundary Rider,* based on plasma screen images of football, will next show at Ararat Art Gallery, 14 November to 12 December 2010.

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Weaving of country lost in translation:

the problem of exhibiting environmental art

TAMSIN KERR

There is a key theme in environmental art that privileges process over product. While this may not suit the art market, it certainly speaks to a more sustainable world. Here, artists use local, collected, natural materials to make temporary and ephemeral works that voice the environment and encourage a more general community connection to place. Art events such as *Floating Land* or *Palimpsest* make the process of the artist the main show, and encourage the viewing community to become similarly immersed participants. At the very least, the otherwise covert world of the artists' studios and collaborations are exposed to the public gaze. As the end, products dissolve back into the landscape, or are carefully dismantled and reused. This is a very different paradigm to that of the mainstream art world which commodifies the individual celebrity artist and their work. Environmental art presents a deliberate and emerging challenge to how the global capitalist market dominates our aspirational choices.

But what happens to the art market if their key product becomes community-based and transient? Whither green art? If environmental art is to become a valued process in society, then perhaps it – like its wider counterpart of climate change – requires a more communal and local-based commissioning and funding process. What

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Contemporary Photography from
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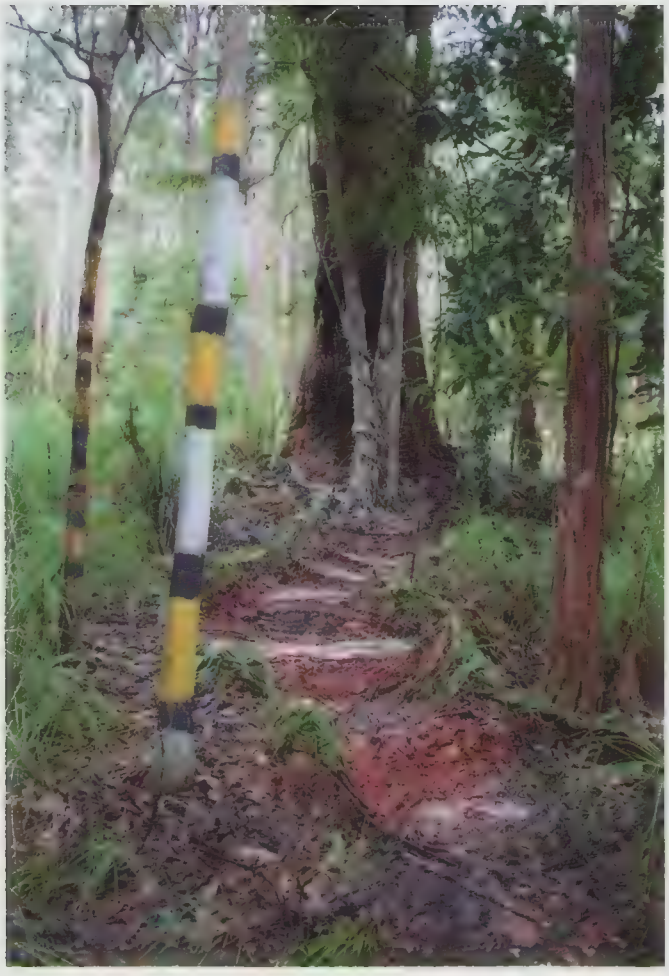
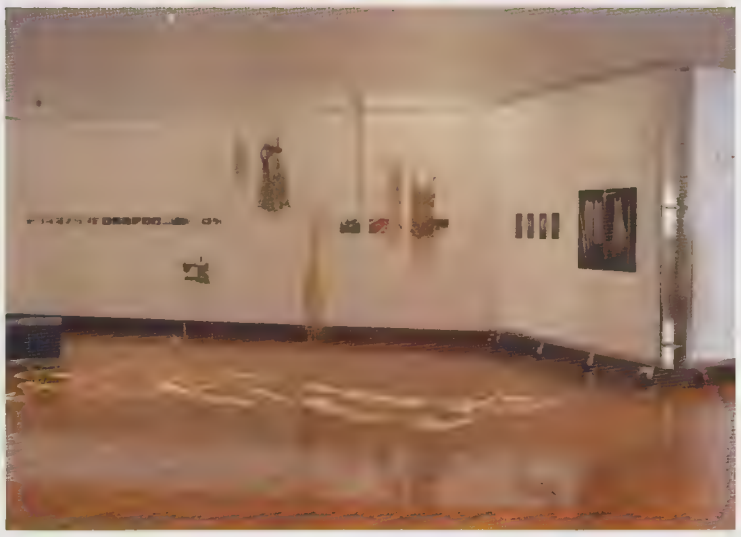
IMAGE: Marien Drew **Penguin with Enamel Jug** 2008 La Trobe University Art Collection Purchased 2009





if green art attempts to have a foot in both camps, to leave out the public in its process and only include them as audience to a later more tangible product? While Andy Goldsworthy may be the pin-up boy of such approaches (using the relatively accessible forms of photography and art books), a more local attempt has been undertaken by the artist-led group, Catchment, on the Sunshine Coast.

Catchment is a Sunshine Coast art-in-nature collective that includes artists Richard Newport, Wendy McGrath, Elizabeth Poole, Jan Dunlop, Corrie Wright, Jonathon Fuller, and Mayrah Dreise. I was the invited writer to their first project, along with film-maker Peter Rogers, and many friends and family members who volunteered their time to photograph, cook, and help make the works. Over a wintry ten days last July, this collective wove up country on a private wetland owned by Richard, using natural materials and slow craft. Everyone, that is, except John Fuller, who took a more conceptual approach. When he arrived late with his two boys and started mowing in the midst of the craft, the tension became palpable. The mower stopped; awaiting a lunch meeting. While John made a bat and ball in Richard's workshop, Richard waylaid me to show me his school of greenwood fishes lightly swimming over the razor grass ocean/forest floor. I suggested there should always be one fish swimming against the flow. When Richard turned one fish around, the flow was surprisingly and completely disrupted. I remained mindful of the metaphor as we sat down to lunch. John explained how he wanted to link the suburbs and the bush, mowing a cricket pitch across the small creek so as to play a ball game with his boys – they will catch until it rains and then nature will take over this game of 'catchment'. John played the important *enfant terrible* of the group, but saw my support for the potent suburban signifier of the mower as far too academic. In the end, he took his bat and ball, and went home (or surfing with his boys), although later his makeshift wicket reappeared on the wished-for green.

In response to this playful poking, we discussed ideas around green art at one of our collective dinners. While in

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many ways, artists in nature are ahead of academics in responding and giving voice to the wild, there is still a tendency to ignore the human and cultural layering of the landscapes they work within. We discussed the spirit of this place and how it might (or might not) be interpreted. Perhaps we decided that this environmental art project played an important role in cleansing the land, rebuilding the relationships between people and place, as well as healing the artists. In any case, the ten days resulted in strong pieces that spoke to the site and the land as well as to more general environmental woes. I thought Corrie's work best reflected the site's history and disturbed spirits; it was carnival in all its aspects: collected colourful leaves, meticulously sewn together, formed a hooded cape that was half-drowned in the waters, the empty face offering the necessary frisson of fear to the celebratory garb (see image AMA # 226, December 2009, p. 71). Wendy's work tapped into the cosmos and wider environmental issues; it sat beside the upturned roots of an ancient stump, the white-painted oysters and dark soil formed a graphic whole that reflected both the fungi of the forest floor and the coral of the seas. This was a stunning statement about where climate change might take us, and was breathtakingly beautiful, especially glowing under the full moon. Jan's work sat beside Elizabeth's; both painstaking pieces, but the product was quite different. Jan's was very much a human product, although made entirely of natural materials; her woven clothes hung prettily in the site – they became nature's wardrobe in amongst the rainforest, but would look good almost anywhere. Conversely, Elizabeth's work was made of and by the site. It called up and spoke to the waters; her subtle use of natural materials made her careful arrangement of cascade and eddy so close to nature's own artistic process that its artifice was almost invisible (and consequently difficult to document). Mayrah's ochres, although rapidly faded, played a critical part in the process. Her work with the spirits of the land set the agenda for the site's project – the trees have their own conversations on this place and Mayrah managed for a brief moment to expose this land-tree-spirit-human continuum. On the final Saturday, Mayrah's last piece, *Gayliyaay guliman* ('generous coolamon' in her Gamilleroi language, *Gamilaraay Yeeralaraay*) was a loose basket hung between the trees at eye-level to the water; it represented a thankyou from the artists to this bit of nature, a return gift from human to the environment.

All the artists mentioned Mayrah's offerings as having caught the spirits and the emotions of *Catchment*. Her major work, at the dawn of the first day, established *Catchment*'s agenda. *Warranggul gayaandhi (tribute to the strong and powerful peace keeper)* recognised the protective spirits of the place as well as paying homage to the tree in celebration. Perhaps *Catchment* tapped into a deeper cross-cultural understanding, a reconciliation from which mainstream Australia might move closer to Indigenous understandings of place. John's suburban lawnmower might be ultimately stilled in the face of something far greater than other artists' opprobrium.

Here is acknowledgement of the more-than-human, in terms of both spirit and nature. It plays an active role in shaping and making work through the artists. This is a sort of material thinking, in which perhaps the locally collected materials use the artist as a tool to express the materials' birthplace. These under-acknowledged aspects of art – collaborative family, material thinking, and spirit – found an outlet in *Catchment*. There was a sense of healing and gratitude, a sense of shared purpose within this more-than-human world. It was a cross-cultural weaving up of country that pervaded *Catchment* and elevated it to something worth doing in each community defined by its place.

But is it worth repeating in a gallery space? Because the site and the process was not open to the public, Richard Newport and Wendy McGrath decided to also curate an exhibition of *Catchment* four months later at the University of the Sunshine Coast Art Gallery. My first impression of this exhibition was good. The gallery space is a great purpose-built building that manages to make any art look good. Richard's fish (on polyplastic stands) dominated the central floor space. Elizabeth's recreation of her work ran along the longest wall and adjoining floor space. Jan's wardrobe hung from the ceiling on sanded pale branches. Photographs of Wendy's work, along with a new collage, sat to the left of the front door, while to the right was an introductory panel. Mayrah used photos of her work to form a rectilinear and historical collage that pointed down to the floor. Her gallery conversion of *Catchment* continued onto the floor in bleached black-and-white tones, reflecting a more circular Indigenous memory of place, and alluding to the limitations of any gallery space in capturing the spirit of a specific part of country. None of her many weavings made it into what she considered a too-sterile space. At the back of the gallery in the corner ran a minimal line of small photos of Corrie's work; her haunting hooded piece was replaced by her sewing machine with its red cotton spool and sewn leaves. This was a key reminder of process rather than of product, and spoke of the impossibility for *Catchment*'s translation within the white box. Perhaps because of its minimalism, Corrie's path of postcard-coloured leaves was unfortunately cut off by a large screen showing Peter Rogers's film (more aimed perhaps at securing television and tourist interest than in capturing the spirit of the event; soaring shots of the Sunshine Coast region dominated over the sense of the actual site). Ironically, Corrie, who was most present on the site (camping in her tent), became least present in the gallery. In its new environment, I think Jan Dunlop's woven clothes were shown in the best light; while Jan's link to her materials and the materiality of place was lost, her pieces were independent enough to survive this sever from their source.

However, as I sat in the space for longer, I was

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increasingly disappointed. The curatorial approach limited how the translation of site to gallery took place. The exhibition did not reflect the collaboration and conversations of the event: instead, each artist was assigned a wall and asked to replicate their ten days without adding new work. The possibility to further develop and present collaborative work was lost. There were also no tangible, physical indicators of the site, nothing to help dissolve the clean lines and polished floor of the gallery space, little to connect us to the local land. One of Andy Goldsworthy's translations in the Smithsonian Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, presents large rounds of slate which straddle its foundations across glass walls that unites both inside and outside space. In Fiona Foley's recent survey exhibition, *Forbidden*, she covered the floor of one room with popping corn and the viewer had to remove footwear and crunch through its textures. In *Catchment*, perhaps leaves could form a similar role, at least as drifts in corners. And the razor grass, that Richard saw as so critical to his fish's story, could have been placed at least in a few token pots. Such natural allusion to the site would have supplemented the photographic and filmic evidence.

Another concern was the exaggeration of artistic difference between the sculptors and those that documented their work. Pancho Collicetti's intended film components were the only still photographs exhibited (the lack of a commissioned still photographer another issue in *Catchment*'s planning) and consequently remained unattributed. Likewise, neither Peter Rogers's film nor Leah Barclay's soundscapes were recognised as part of the art. John Fuller and his conceptual work were erased completely, its intellectual challenge of playfulness over preciousness apparently both embarrassing and unwanted. Other participants – family, friends, and volunteers of the artists who assisted in producing and recreating the work – also vanished: the exhibition of *Catchment* privileged the individual artist over its collective necessity. There was little left to speak to the collaborative and collective process of the event; nothing to take us to a more tangible sense of the site's environment. Environmental art does and should challenge the gallery space, but this opportunity seems to have been lost amidst a vague sense of insult which I imagine extends to the land itself, as well as to *Catchment*'s participating artists. The translation of site to gallery is no trivial thing, and requires a sophisticated set of curatorial skills. There are also lessons here in enabling artists to also become curators of their work; issues perhaps for the fashion of artist-led initiatives to grapple with.

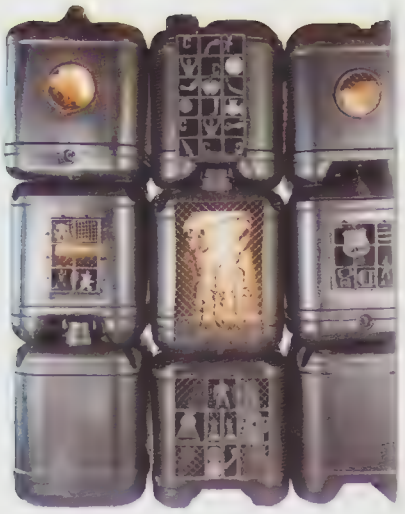
Not coincidently, the artists I like best are those who most reflect upon and intellectualise their work. Both Corrie and Mayrah used the exhibition to comment on its deterioration from place to space, from country to box, from process to product. And herein lies the ongoing challenge for any environmental art that also wants space and value in gallery terms. Many of *Catchment*'s in-situ works, such as Corrie's hood of leaves, Wendy's coral fungus of shells, and Mayrah's many weavings and ochred trees, were not attempted within the gallery space. Although Mayrah and Corrie managed to capture some sense of their frustration at this limitation of translation.

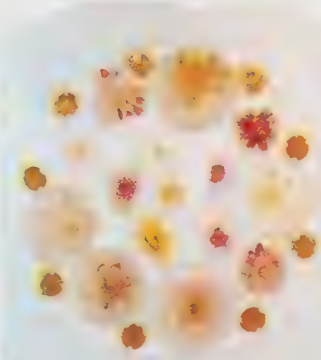
Catchment is by no means alone in this problematic. Museums have struggled since their inception to translate the stuff of life into exhibition. The travelling exhibition of *Habitus-Habitat* (taking artists' works from Queensland's Great Walks and displaying them across regional galleries) has to overcome a similar lack of connection to its places. But as artists like Foley and Goldsworthy have shown, it is possible to present environmental art and comment on place, at least partially, successfully within the confines of the gallery space. It is certainly possible to acknowledge the collective endeavour of art and nature, of country and its artistic interpreters. Success requires a willingness to depart from the traditional gallery model that privileges individual artist celebrity, and instead depends upon the imagination and creativity held by the best of artists and curators. While none of the *Catchment* works were for sale and the exhibition celebrated the local, there was still some journey towards commodification (of both the work and the artist) that I think environmental art needs to withstand if its message is to have import. The 'site' in site-specific art will always remain difficult to replicate within the marketing of artist and product that forms the core business of most galleries. The process of using art to connect to country and the protest of environmental art against the art market's expert commodification is too often lost in a gallery's translation. Environmental art needs its site of making to remain connected. The place, and its representation, matters.

Catchment, an environmental artist-led initiative, brought together artists over ten days in July 2009 and the exhibition *Catchment: Art-in-nature project* was held at the University of the Sunshine Coast Art Gallery 26 November to 19 December 2009. A further *Catchment* exhibition is planned for the Cooloola Regional Gallery in 2011.

Dr Tamsin Kerr is a writer and artist living on the Sunshine Coast. She directs the Cooroora Institute and brings together the arts and crafts to celebrate environment and local place.

Cecile Williams: *Contained*





NALDA SEARLES

'Not even a superhero could escape from it', Cecile Williams stated after a tour of the (then vacant) Christmas Island Detention Centre in 2008.

Cecile Williams is a West Australian sculptor well known for an ability to express poignant and ironic ideas. Utilising salvaged materials almost exclusively she makes surprising and deeply touching statements. *Contained*, an exhibition requiring close viewing, explores the life, culture, history, as well as recent events of Christmas Island.

For the past six years the Christmas Island community has invited Williams to work on festival and community events; designing and producing theatre and parade costumes, sets, and large-scale community props for parades. When off-duty Williams found Greta Beach where tonnes of flotsam and jetsam plastics, dragged from Southeast Asia and carried on north-west currents swirl in, she thought she had died and gone to heaven. Fascinated by its potential as a sculpture medium she started gathering it.

'Collecting was my way of meditating, to take a break from the hectic demands of the projects', she says, and for this reason daily journeys to Greta Beach became an adventurous routine. On one of her collecting sorties she found a small plastic tube, the ends sealed with wax. Inside was a prayer in Islamic text for the safe return for a fisherman. Williams developed the idea of *Contained* from that find.

Daily collecting and sorting hundreds of ocean-worn plastic fragments, toys, toothbrushes, containers, combs, flowers, weapons, there seemed no end to the mass. Meanwhile, she documented life on Christmas Island with her camera and drawing books.

Returning to her home and studio in Denmark (WA) laden with sacks of plastic finds and vague ideas she set about constructing the works for *Contained*, the exhibition. The thousands of small, worn plastic pieces were categorised into colours and concepts. Williams visited the local tip and sourced empty ten and twenty litre plastic containers. Various shaped windows were cut into the vessels and the stories were fitted within them. She settled on fine plastic straps and wires to attach plastic to plastic. Rubber thongs – probably the most abundant of all the floating rubbish (Williams once did an installation on Christmas Island using 700 of them) – were drawn into using a scalpel blade. From these procedures Williams constructed thirteen sculptural Christmas Island stories entirely from salvaged plastics.

An uninhabited Indian Ocean island until claimed by the British in 1898, Christmas Island was immediately developed into a phosphate-mining venture. Phosphate is derived from the bird droppings compacted over millennia that shape the island's topography. Indentured labour was sourced from China and Malaysia through agents in Singapore. These men worked the mine largely by hand. Small, laden trolleys were pushed to the wharf where the phosphate was loaded onto ships. The labour force supported the exotic vices of gambling, opium smoking, and comfort women, then tragically beri-beri set in as a result of inadequate diet. A cultural mix of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and English cultures together with Buddhist, Muslim, Shinto, and Christian religions slowly evolved, creating a unique community.

Williams made the phosphate story in five segments. Using white containers with white and black representations, a ghastly story is told. In *Excavate*, a cluster of miners wielding shovels move the rubble from the earth to waiting trolleys. *Phosphate* shows a line of the trolleys, hand-pushed from deep in the pits. *After Hours* is a

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curtained interior with bottles of grog plonked on a table, shapely, dismembered female arms, and delicate high-heeled shoes floating within the bottles. *Dice Den*, where the stakes were high, has a gaming board and gamblers leaning on small tables, doing their money, historically rendering them unable to afford the return journey to their homeland. Finally in *Beriberi*, white skeletons dangle after having succumbed to the lack of Vitamin C in the island's food sources.

However it is for the Christmas Island Detention Centre that this remote Indian Ocean location is most well known these days. Built to contain 1800 asylum seekers (soon to be increased to 2300) it is filled to capacity. Arriving in Australian waters from the north aboard dodgy fishing boats, men, women and children are placed in the high-security detention centre. Processing by Immigration authorities is lengthy: the fortunate ones are given visas to remain in Australia, and those less fortunate are returned to their country of origin or any other country which will accept them.

Sited away from the community, the presence of the sprawling detention centre has put pressure on the island community. The frustration and anger expressed by many of the detainees has created a tense situation. Housing is scarce as detention centre staff occupy any available rental properties. Williams mentioned that developers are buying up land and houses, meaning prices will go beyond what a local resident could afford.

Detained, a major piece in *Contained*, consists of nine black twenty-litre containers stacked three-high and three-wide. Rectangular, square and circular windows contain scenarios acted out by toy soldiers and objects graphically fitted into the spaces. One cut-out becomes a gridded wall; men are grasping at the bars, a guard with a gun stands threatening, objects seemingly benign take on a violent and restrictive appearance. A circular hole to be peered through shows circus animals trained to do as commanded. Carnivores balance precariously on tall fragile towers. A white elephant is teetering on a stool at the behest of its trainer, mirroring the futility Williams feels about the detention centre. Strapped into a black hole, weapons and badges on a gun rack indicate an authority not to be challenged (not to be tampered with).

The sculpture transcends its dimensions and becomes large and surreal. The repetition of black figures, grids, weapons and strange shapes all expand and take one into being both an aggressor and a victim. The black interiors are lit with dim lights emphasising the oppressive darkness it bleeds into. Williams has tackled this difficult issue with strength. *Detained* informs and reminds us that within our borders there exists a situation of great tension.

On the island places of worship are lively, daily attended and serviced. Buddhist chanting, incense drifting through temple entrances, a Christian church where weddings are celebrated, monks performing ancient rites and religious festivals are embraced. The Hungry Ghosts Festival celebrates the lunar seventh moon when the gates of the underworld are opened and hungry spirits roam the earth.

The *Hungry Ghosts* sculpture constructed in a temple shape using nine plastic containers in both red and white, glows with a holy light. Williams has created both a solemnly respectful and a celebratory atmosphere. Within a red circular frame a host of ghost faces cut from translucent white spoons hover cheek by jowl, peering at the viewer. In another window a holy man is offering a wad of smoking incense sticks to the distant horizon. Baskets laden with appetising foods are placed as offerings on an altar to appease the hungry wanderers. The detail, poignancy, and humour are breathtaking.

Williams is a passionate gardener and in *Greta's Garden* she pays tribute to the remote beach which has offered up these amazing finds of trash allowing her to relish in her creative spirit. Within white translucent containers she has set exquisite salvaged artificial flowers. The ocean fades plastic to softer, rounder tones giving these flowers the appearance of romantic pastel cupcakes lovingly made for a tea party.

The installation of *Contained* in the spacious Gallery Central glowed with light. Sounds of waves lapping on Greta Beach, the Imam's call to prayer and island birdsong flooded the room. Being within it was powerful and thought provoking. Williams has rifled through many issues, her compelling vision carries us to Christmas Island and to an awareness we should heed. There is much to be attended to there.

The late John Stringer, senior curator for the Kerry Stokes Collection, wrote of Cecile Williams in the catalogue for *Peep*:[1]

> These exotic sources and the artist's [Williams's] own enthusiasm for discovery are significant clues to the quirky and curious images that abound in her work combining the unexpected and unconventional. Inspired by the richness and diversity of popular culture they draw on humble universal everyday experience.

The complete *Contained* exhibition has been purchased by a private collector who hopes to support the artist's desire to have the exhibition shown on Christmas Island. For the Christmas Islanders it will be a case of 'this is your life'.

1. John Stringer, quoted from 'Cecile Williams' essay in *Peep: Glimpses of the last 4 decades from the Kerry Stokes Collection*, exhibition catalogue, Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth, 2007, p. 56. *Peep* was exhibited at the TarraWarra Museum of Art, Victoria (2007/08), and at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (2008); see review by Andrew Gaynor, AMA # 207, March 2008.

Contained was exhibited at Gallery Central, Central TAFE, Perth, 6 February to 6 March 2010, as part of the Perth International Arts Festival. www.gallerycentral.com.au / www.cecilewilliams.com

Nalda Searles is a West Australian artist and occasional writer.

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Celebrating 20 years in 2011

Controversy & acclaim:

60 years of the Mosman Art Prize

JEREMY ECCLES

The March issue of *AMA* contained at least 21 references to and/or adverts for Australian art prizes – plus one really excellent article about special Indigenous prizes asking, amongst other things, why these artists of country don't win the Wynne Prize every year.[1] Shame upon you, Editor, for underfulfilling your norms. For the newly compiled *Art Competitions & Exhibitions 2010* from Artrillium House lists 1243 Australian events containing a competitive element; while NAVA's longer-standing *Money for Visual Artists* manages ninety-four pages full of prize and grant opportunities – with approximately five per page!

That all suggests a minimum target of 100 prizes per AMA issue. And not just new ones like the Paul Guest Drawing Prize in Bendigo – which pushes the Artrillium total up two, though it also slipped down one to 1244 thanks to the $80,000 Helen Lempriere Sculpture Prize termination. To draw a long financial bow – if only two-thirds of these are for 'professional industry' prizes; and if the Eutick Memorial Still Life Award at Coffs Harbour is twice as generous as the average in offering a $20,000 pool – the total still comes to a munificent $8.2 million! That's over half the $13.8 million that the Australia Council spent on the visual arts in Australia in 2006/7, and much more than ended up in the hands of individual artists.

What an odd imbalance in a country that still officially prides itself on state support for the arts?

Is it a desperate attempt by the arts in Oz to match the dominant sporting culture by creating 'winners' (and, of course, losers)? Is it instead that Australia doesn't quite go down the American 'tithing' route in which people feel a duty to contribute to society. Putting your name on an arty prize – whether you're a corporation, a municipality, a rich person or someone keen to commemorate an artist – keeps both the donor and their object in the public eye in a relatively painless but sure way.

Or could it be looked at from the other side of the equation, as the ABC's Andrew Frost did recently in regretting the huge increase in prize numbers over the past decade: 'The success or failure of art [or an artist?] is all too often judged by prizes.' Frost, ironically, suggests that Australia instead taps into its gambling instincts by winning more money for the arts via a lottery.

But there is a case for prizes. Geographically it allows Eudunda, Euroa and Coffs Harbour to participate in the national art scene. Minor or undervalued artforms such as sculpture, portraiture, photography, ceramics, glass or, one might argue, Indigenous art in the face of curators who still doubt that it's 'contemporary', may receive their fifteen minutes in the sun. And new sources of money are mined.

NSW Country Energy was a company needing rural credibility. At first they were offered sponsorship rights supporting regional artists by the New England Gallery in Armidale; and turned it down. But when a rural landscape painting competition was mooted, they could hardly be restrained from writing out their cheque.

Less certainly beneficial, the arts have at least a chance of hitting the news with the controversies so often attached to prizes in challenge to the sex lives of footy players or Spencer Tunick's bums. But did Moet et Chandon and Seppelt appreciate controversy? They both started and then cancelled cutting-edge art prizes. And, alluded to above, Perpetual eventually got fed up with the Helen Lempriere Sculpture Prize after awarding $1.1 million of its trust funds to a hut, a caravan, and then, last year, nobody at all!

Time then to give praise where praise is due to the grand-daddy of municipal art prizes – in Mosman. It was

p35: 1. Guan Wei, *Gazing into Deep Space No.8* (1-3), 2001, acrylic on canvas, 127 x 148.5cm

2. Joseph Szabo, *Without - Within IV*, 1968, oil on canvas, 117 x 111cm

3. Margaret Olley, *New England Landscape*, 1947, oil on canvas, 72 x 98 cm

This page: Lucy Culliton, *Still Life - White Ground*, 2000, oil on board, 120 x 120cm

All images from the Collection of Mosman Art Gallery Mosman Council. Images courtesy the artists.

actually pipped at the municipal post by Albury in May 1947. But, unlike Albury, it's still running 62 years after its October debut – interrupted only twice, by financial strictures in 1975 and by Town Hall rebuilding in 1987. In fact, 125 Prizes have been handed out thanks to variability in such matters as dividing 'traditional' from 'non-traditional' painting, the separate recognition of drawing and watercolour, and then the split between painting and 'other medium', which stretched to prints and bas reliefs, but never to 3D or multi-media.

Mosman itself recently celebrated sixty years of its Prize with an exhibition of 94 of the 124 prize-winning artworks in an art gallery that was also one of the consequences of an acquisitive Prize – the growing collection needed to be housed. In the catalogue entitled *Controversy and Acclaim*, curator Katrina Cashman argues that the gallery then regenerated the Prize, providing it with a necessary place in which to show finalists off. Cashman also seizes the opportunity to boast, with a quote from the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s John McDonald: 'In Australia, art prizes come and go. They may offer large sums of money and have glamorous marketing campaigns, but they still have limited life-spans. The chief exceptions to the rule are the Archibald and the Mosman Art Prize.'

One undoubted factor in both the foundation and survival of the Mosman Prize was Alan Gamble. He was an architect who'd moved to Mosman during World War II when the current house pricing mania was unimagined in a harbour-side suburb threatened by Japanese submarines. Mosman definitely needed something to lift its spirits and reputation, and an artistic history going back to the Curlew Camp *plein air* artists pointed the way. By 1947, Gamble was already a local alderman and the first full-time lecturer in architecture at Sydney University. He'd go on to become its first Public Relations Officer and found its War Memorial Gallery. So he was well-connected in the arts, knowing Lloyd Rees enough to get his agreement to judge the first Prize.

Amazingly, Rees's selection of the twenty-four-year-old Margaret Olley's *New England Landscape* as the winner from a field of fifty-one caused ructions. It would seem to be the dead trees she painted, 'symbolic of the vastness and isolation of the Australian landscape,' that shocked an urban audience used to 'the heroic pastoral landscapes by many Australian establishment painters of the early 20th century,' in Cashman's assessment. The *Herald* critic snootily admitted that Olley's work just managed to 'raise the exhibition from oblivion'!

'Modernism was still on the cusp in Australia then,' comments Cashman – pointing out that the pioneering Sydney Contemporary Art Society (which introduced abstraction) had its first exhibition only in 1938; the Murdoch *Herald* exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art followed in 1939; and then the War shipped most of the artists influenced by such events off to Europe.

So the controversy continued. In 1954, the Council debated a motion to cease all this nonsensical expenditure of ratepayers' funds – but faced a huge campaign from artists, for whom the Prize was a rare opportunity to be seen in public in a city where only the Macquarie, Grosvenor and Blaxland Galleries offered commercial opportunities. 250 entries was now the norm – today it's a thousand. And by then winners had included Douglas Annand, Guy Warren, Francis Lymburner, Carl Plate, Grace Cossington Smith and Weaver Hawkins. Judges had included Desiderious Orban, Margaret Preston and Sir Erik Langkler, President of the Royal Art Society.

Even the 50 guineas prize (now $20,000) was serious. Olley was enabled to stay on in Sydney on the proceeds rather than turning tail for Murwillumbah – obtaining her first solo showing the following year. Later, Lucy Culliton would build her first studio, John Caldwell would not have to give up painting his luminous watercolours, surrealist Joe Rose would chuck in his forestry job, and Tom Carment could afford to buy a piano that he still hears every day.

As well as revealing the Prize's musical legacy, Carment admitted that his 2005 winning entry of six small paintings in a single frame was partly motivated by the size limit on Mosman entries and partly by the identity of the judge that year, the late Nick Waterlow, who'd already bought such works for the Macquarie Collection. Could the 2009 winner, Alexander Lavroff, creator of a 'Zubaran-like still-life' in the words of judge Margaret Olley, have borne in mind that artist's own opus in making his entry? Mind you, the eclectic Waterlow also made sure that Mosman got to live with a violent Adam Cullen as well!

Mosman also has to live with a really distinguished collection of abstracts from Margo Lewers, Nancy Borlase, Peter Laverty, Elwynn Lynn, Thomas Gleghorn and just about every Eastern European name that's ever arrived on the art scene here. Joseph Szabo, for instance, slipped a hard edge canvas in, taking the fancy of 1968 judge John Olsen, of all people. Recently, the Chinese *arrivistes* lead by Guan Wei have found favour – but then Jenny Sages, his judge, was born in China.

It's a rich and fascinating history even though it's hardly the ideal way to develop a 'collection'. If only, mutter the Mosman burghers, the judges had preferred John Coburn, Brett Whiteley, Colin Lanceley, Roland Wakelin, Sali Herman or Sid Nolan – all of whom entered the Mosman Art Prize, but failed to win!

They should have listened to local identity Margaret Preston who in 1952 offered the following advice in her judgement of the Mosman:

> You are acquiring one particular work each year, and even though you may not like them at the moment, in years to come you will realise that by accumulating works which are representative of the particular year, you will have put down a history of Art in this country. The main source of trouble in the art world today is that the general public will insist on knowing what they like (or dislike) without having anything to back it up!

1. See Darren Jorgensen's 'The Masks of Merlam & the Shining Swords of Australian Art Awards', *Art Monthly Australia* # 227, March 2010, pp. 9-11.

Controversy & Acclaim: 60 years of The Mosman Art Prize, curated by Katrina Cashman, was shown at the Mosman Art Gallery, 12 December 2009 to 31 January 2010. Registations for the 2010 Mosman Art Prize open in May, and close 19 July. Details via: www.mosman.nsw.gov.au/mosman/culture/art-gallery#art-prizes

Jeremy Eccles has been broadcasting and writing on the arts since 1983, with an increasing specialisation in Indigenous art and culture.

Quixotic Pursuit:

Tim Miller's *Sundown*

PATTI MILLER

Miller's *Sundown* project see

quixotic. At the beginning of 2009, he began making a vast artwork consisting of 365 small (13.5 x 17.5cm) images of the sun as it disappears behind the earth each evening. Each image is a pastel or very occasionally, oil, painted *en plein air*. Like Quixote, his quest has been open to the vagaries of fate at every moment, but more fundamentally resembling our Spanish hero's quest, he has been in pursuit of an ideal unrecognisable to many of his contemporaries.

A conversation with Miller reveals his uncompromising approach to painting as strictly visual representation – not political, nor conceptual, not even a medium of psychological expression. It is a way of exploring a purely visual world, based on the science of vision, which would appear to make him a radical in the sense that he is attempting a return to modernism's almost forgotten roots, an attempt to create 'the sensation of seeing' as Cézanne put it. Like Cézanne, he is not interested in the 'copying of objects' but 'in conveying something far more mysterious, entwined in the very roots of being, in the implacable source of sensation'. It's over a century later and a great deal of painting water has flowed under – and over – the bridge, but for Miller, Cézanne's words still encapsulate the only aim of painting – to recreate the artist's visual experience. It requires a knowledge of craft to a degree barely tolerated in some contemporary art schools and puts him outside the mainstream.

Miller is used to being out-of-step. After studying in Sydney, and travelling in Europe, he has lived and painted at Rockley, near Bathurst, for nearly thirty years. He has presented his work in group and solo shows regularly, but has largely stayed outside the Sydney gallery world. The *Sundown* exhibition marks his return, a vast series of pastels all on a subject difficult to save from kitsch.

Sunsets are almost universally popular; in fact, a quick google of the word 'sunset' reveals ninety million sunset sites. No amount of popularity and no subject of itself is kitsch, but some are more prone to 'the two tears' of Milan Kundera's definition in his novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) – the first tear the pure reaction to beauty (the artist's tear, if you like); the second, the tear of sentiment or kitsch. It must be allowed that the sun setting is one such subject. Even Miller's curator, Larry McDonald at Charles Hewitt Gallery in Darlinghurst, said: 'Most artists are terrified of sunsets, usually only an innocent would

attempt it – then reduce it to kitsch.'

Obviously there are many exceptions, where experience rather than innocence has approached the daily glory. There is, for example, Van Gogh's stark *Willows at Sunset* (1888), Turner's spare *Scarlet Sunset* (c. 1830-40), and Monet's gorgeous *Sunset in Venice* (1908) – none of them innocent and each of them with the discipline to stop at the first tear. It would appear that Miller is no innocent either. He has made 365 images, testing the limits of concentration and determination, and yet it is hard to find even a momentary fall into sentiment. They are by no means harsh or disturbing paintings, but in his hands the sundown images are a rigorous series of observations of last light, owing much to Miller's dedication to the science of seeing.

When seeing the images assembled, what strikes one is colour, and then narrative. The paintings often glow like opals; there are crimsons, purples, pinks, lilacs, oranges as wild as a carnival, and then silk greys and palest imaginable sage greens, as delicate and sombre as a long sorrow. At the same time there is a subtlety and economy that makes one think of Max Meldrum's tonalist images. They are small paintings, almost miniature, but spacious and dynamic. With so many images, each done in the moment, there is an occasional unresolved composition, but the variation becomes part of the overall complexity of the work. That Miller has been, for the vast majority of images, so ready for the moment, is remarkable.

In fact, it is probably the act of painting in the moment that gives these images their energy. There is no sign of the carefully thought-out decisions and considered skilfulness evident in some of Miller's other work, but a conviction that his decisions and skills are unobtrusively serving his perceptions. There is such freedom and responsiveness in these images that one is not surprised to learn that he began these works as a daily meditation rather than as a set of artistic challenges.

At the same time as an overriding experience of colour, one perceives a narrative, both diurnal and annual, in these 365 images. Here is a fundamental tale unfolding; the last, almost hallucinogenic flair of light as the sun disappears. It's a narrative of loss and renewal but also an exploration of littorals, the brief shore where day and night meet and dissolve one into the other. It's the story of the mysterious place between worlds, a moment in which the daily changes of atmospheric conditions are as perceptible as the longer shift of seasons.

For all that, it appears it was not the narrative subject that interested Miller. Choosing the infinite subject of sundowns was, paradoxically, a way of eliminating the decision about 'what to paint', for a year at least. Quixotic or not, he has created a major work in his mosaic of sundowns. It is only a pity they cannot be kept together as the one work they were intended to be.

Sundown 365 Days, 365 Paintings was shown at Charles Hewitt Gallery, Sydney, 11 to 31 March. The images can be seen on youtube: www.youtube.com/watch?hl=en-GB&v=A4jFsumvwUA

Patti Miller is the author of several books and many articles on life and art.

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Not the void exactly:

Species of Spaces

JOHANNES KLABBERS

> This is how space begins, with words only, signs traced on a blank page.[1]

'What space [makes] possible is [relations] between objects and subjects and as such, West Space, in its earlier manifestation in the 'real' West, and in recent years from the first floor of a nondescript building in Anthony Street on the northern edge of the Melbourne CBD, has been making possible relations between art objects and subjects, for about two decades now.

During this time Sydney artist, writer, curator and academic Ryszard Dabek has been a regular participant in text projects, collaborations and exhibitions of art objects at West Space. In his recent show at West Space he employs the idea of space, and specifically the idea of 'species of spaces' (a title from French author Georges Perec's 1974 book), and curates an exhibition in which he asks us to consider the space between representation and experience, and especially the *absence* of space, the void, or rather, ' ... not the void exactly, but what there is around about or inside it'.[2]

In Melissa Laing's striking video *borderline*, the camera wanders hesitantly from here to there and back, traversing a space designed to process international arrivals; however human subjects are eerily absent. The viewer's relationship to the pictorial space and the slightly strange proportions of the objects within it are reminiscent of a scene created in 3D modelling software but its barely noticeable imperfections make it more likely that we find ourselves in a tiny maquette.

This most transient of spaces owned and operated by corporations serving the state, also functions in relation to time. It plots an in-between time, *not the void exactly* but a space where time is suspended, where relations are impossible, in which the *arrivée* is present physically but her status, like that of the camera, remains indeterminate. Here, where citizens whose legitimacy is yet to be established walk in the straight line which the authorities demand, no doubt watched by cameras or custom officers, and lately health officials, looking for signs of fever or the characteristic gait and the worried expression of someone with contraband concealed in their intimate space/s, the traveller is uncertain of her location in space and time, and

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whether or not the process of arrival is going to be successfully concluded.

The popularity of reality TV shows such as *Border Patrol* attests to the power of these in-between spaces. Where a decade ago millions split their sides over cavorting kittens and inebriated men and women attempting to dance on tables in *Australia's Funniest Home Videos*, these days audiences revel in *schadenfreude* watching the traveller who has to unpack every single one of their suitcases and seeing its contents being laid out and carefully examined by latexed hands, and/or being asked to accompany the officer to the interview room to argue their legitimacy with a more senior official.

Where Laing's gaze is determinedly fixed on political and ideological space, Brett Jones's mixed-media works (rice paper, tissue, PVA glue, surf wax, plaster casting, steel, sandblasted acrylic, ink on watercolour paper) are quite oblique and resistant to interpretation, read like a nostalgic meditation mourning lost referents. Each of the four works (*white flag, blank spaces...gaps in her outline, intractable*, and *blue*) interrogates what is not: negative space, erased space, absences of depth, of significance, of space in which to exist. This melancholy is evident too in the artist's prose poem on the theme of uncertainty: 'There is a point where the signs are clear, but then this point shifts in perspective.'[3]

In *Immeuble Molitor* Ryszard Dabek forces his exquisitely composed photographs of the interior of Le Corbusier's empty apartment on the outskirts of Paris, into a series of found frames of different sizes which have been stripped and coated a stark, duco-like, white enamel, mirroring the post/modernist crisis precipitated by the architect's hard lines.

The title of its companion piece, *you were there with me*, refers to the letters Le Corbusier's wife Yvonne wrote to her husband as he swanned around the globe and she languished in the iconic apartment. Dabek isolates and destabilises the fields of colour from the *Immeuble Molitor* photographs and releases them into an immaculately neutral 3D space. In direct contradiction to the straight lines preferred by Le Corbusier, they are allowed to float and intersect and be reflected by their environment, causing them to exist in ever-changing relations to each other, and seeming to revel in our inability to interpret them.

It is difficult to imagine work which is any more site-specific than the huge, stringed instruments spanning up to half a kilometre which have been installed in the hills of south western NSW by The WIRED Lab, an interdisciplinary audio research project instigated by Sarah Last. The project builds on the investigations pioneered by Alan Lamb, who is also a member, with his recordings of the sounds made by abandoned telegraph wires in the vast spaces of regional West Australia in the 1980s.

Difficult too to imagine a space or an instrument which better exemplifies the idea of 'maximalism' coined by Melbourne composers/sound artists Robin Fox and Anthony Pateras who define it as 'an approach to sound which cultivates complex structures along both horizontal (dynamic) and vertical (timbre) axes'[4]; whilst being at the same time perfectly attuned to Cage's concept of aleatory music.

For the wires are an index of the specific atmospheric conditions, the wind, the rain, the flights of the insects in *this* space at *this* time. In West Space it is wireless headphones which enable us to travel beyond this space/time into these hills. If only what we were hearing was live, as it was when Last and her crew commandeered that most Modernist of icons – the train – for the *Locomotivus* sound art event in 2006 in rural New South Wales where the live sound of the wires was transmitted into moving train carriages.

It is the intention of the curator that through our interrogation of the spatial relations described by and in these objects and the juxtapositions between them in this specific space, we recognise that space is also an 'effect produced by the operations that orient it', as de Certeau has it.[5] This, together with a beautiful catalogue (designed by Sarah Stubbs) containing solid essays by each artist and the curator, is what made this humble show in a small space a success. We were able to connect art with history, architecture and literature; and to engage with the world beyond the walls of the gallery, where economic and political realities determine relationships between softer, more vulnerable subjects and objects, and all the species of spaces between them.

1. Georges Perec quoted by Ryszard Dabek in *On Species of Spaces*, exhibition catalogue, 2009.
2. Dabek, 2009.
3. Brett Jones, *Exile* in *On Species of Spaces*, in Dabek, 2009.
4. Jim Knox, *RealTime*, 76, Dec/Jan 2006.
5. Michel de Certeau quoted by Dabek, 2009.

Species of Spaces was curated by Ryszard Dabek and exhibited at West Space, Melbourne, 11 June to 4 July 2009. Participating artists include Ryszard Dabek, Brett Jones, Melissa Laing and The WIRED Lab.

Johannes Klabbers is a writer, curator and artist. He is employed by Charles Sturt University as an academic on the Wagga Wagga campus of its School of Communication and Creative Industries.

Artist in Residence Program for the year 2011

Applications are now open for March 2011 to March 2012 Ashfield Council Artist Residency

Closing date 5pm, Friday 3 September 2010
Included is accomodation at Thirning Villa + $200 per week allowance

For more information and an application package contact:
Anthia Hart t: 02 9716 1866 or e: anthiah@ashfield.nsw.gov.au with the word AIR in the subject line.

Ashfield Council

Madrid and the essential youthfulness of art

capitalistic societies, there is hardly a moment for the youth of today to enjoy the true beauty of life; to relax and explore the many heights and occasional depths of creativity. Madrid is undoubtedly a mad-rush city. It is also one of the cultural capitals of Europe, packed with museums brimming with art treasures. But this young generation (including myself), fuelled by Internet addictions and mobile phone mania, and indoctrinated with that horrible corporate formula that equates time with money, have no time for art. Or if they have time, it is very limited.

So art needs to be a buffet *libre*; a rapid and inexpensive self-service shop which offers visual and soulful thrills in quick succession. The Matisse exhibition at Madrid's Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza last summer was one such offering. An astonishingly sensual collection of 74 paintings, sculptures and drawings by the French master were loaned out to Madrid by some 50 museums and collections worldwide. The result was a visually stimulating experience that was as breezy and light as the sprightly green entrance to the museum which housed it.

Having decided to move to the south of France in 1917 to work on his reputation as an emerging great in French painting and on that distinctive colourful style. Matisse displayed an infatuation in this period with a view out of windows. The resulting series of paintings display the softness of the sea and the sky – these two elements which he called 'the most soft things in the world'.

On and on, the young souls fly through this exhibition, taking colours and impressions with them on the way, listening to rap music or hip hop on iPod rather than the usual and utterly boring information on museum listening devices. In this youthful art-as-purely-visual-stimulation rush, there's hardly time or interest for this tiresome background monologue. Perhaps there is time to read funky painting names like *Seated Odalisque, left leg bent*, and with a satisfied nod we know that the artist was really 'high', not on any substance in particular but rather on life itself.

Is this then what we young generation need from art – the recovery of that delight in life, the process of escaping the big bad time machine which encapsulates us all? Time has barely passed – only 45 minutes – when this delightful little collection comes to an end. As always there is something pushing us onwards, further and further. to the Reina Sofia modern art museum just a short 15-minute walk away. Here, the crazy collection of art on the ground floor promises more thrills for the young, adventurous soul.

On entry, pictures of a man drinking from a wine glass spring to the eye. The young apprehend; this could be us! Next to it, a series of pictures of a man in boxers stuck in quicksand: this could certainly be us too. This is art to smash art apart – avant-garde is its fancy name. There's no need to know names of artists here or take much time to consider their intent; a rack of jackets and trousers shows just how meaningless and meaningful this art can be. We come and see and are revolted, disgusted, inspired or simply swept away.

And there is the key. To escape from this big bad time machine, someone has built a wooden standing box. Stand in here and time stands still. Outside the world bustles away, but inside these crazy walls there is something called inspiration, a mostly free concept. Up a few floors and connected plastic tubes pump water around and around; this is *circulation*, by German artist Hans Haacke. A few metres on and the child-like drawings of Cy Twombly show us that we can all be artists. It is this spiritual proximity, this destruction of set patterns, which pulls youngsters to this museum in droves.

This is confirmed by Gabriella, a young Venezuelan who regularly visits the capital's museums: 'The Reina Sofia has a lot of contemporary and surrealist art, so it is much more appealing than classical paintings like in El Prado – you can still admire one but to see room after room is not as visually stimulating for us; you know, we're used to TV.' Adds her sister: 'I've never understood people standing with their hands behind their back looking at a single painting for 15 minutes, trying to analyse it. That is total rubbish. We like to do a quick jog around the museum and stop at things we like. Also, we don't sit down to watch those oldish videos; that's really weird.'

This restlessness and constant search for thrills is embodied in the paintings of Salvador Dali, one of the museum's undoubted stars. Youngsters congregate in the room where some of his most famous masterpieces hang.

'I really like Dali, that's why I came here,' says Julian, a visitor from the USA who has taken advantage of the free hours at the end of the day. 'I like the collection; I'm living with a host family, and they told me the Del Prado and the Reina Sofia are good places to visit while it's free. I go through the museum pretty fast; if I see something I like I'll stop. But especially if the free hours are only two hours, I'll go through fast. It's really about saving money. If I had more time I would slow down.'

There we are again; the essential problem of time. The Reina Sofia, a veritable magnet of the young and young at heart, offers many forms of escape for those weary of these mad-rush lives. For those who can appreciate his works, there are plenty of Miro's masterpieces, floating timelessly and effortlessly above everything connected with everyday life. A few dots here and there, on vivid or dull backgrounds, or an arrow depicting a bird in space; that is the genius and the limitless freedom of the great Catalan artist.

Then there is the show-stopping spectacle offered by one of Spain's favourite sons, the great Picasso. His sad, big masterpiece *Guernica* occupies an entire room of its own, one always crammed full of visitors, young and old. For the old, this is a reminder of the horrors of war, the sinister makings of Hitler's hellish dreams for world domination and the ugly, malformed faces of dying victims from that terrible air-raid during the Spanish civil war. For our young generation, this overwhelming painting may represent something else; the grandeur of death, the impossibility of escape in a world which pushes you ever on towards the unforgiving edge. We may have arrived at our greatest reason for visiting art museums and escaping the mad rush: the essential youthfulness of art.

Matthias Krug is a young writer based in Madrid, Spain. He has written for prestigious newspapers and publications across six continents, including literary magazines like *Bartleby Snopes* and *Danse Macabre*. www.krugwriting.com

Photographs by Matthias Krug.

Letter from London

[illegible] winter in London is cold and crowded. T. S. Eliot's 'unreal city', or if you prefer, Jonathan Raban's 'soft city', is a Tower of Babel teeming with art shows, artist's talks, symposia, illustrated lectures by celebrity academics, curators and writers. Where to begin?

At the Gagosian Gallery, with its large white rooms and their high ceilings, and attendants dressed in black, *Crash*, a homage exhibition to the late J. G. Ballard, vividly captured with its various 52 exhibits Ballard's longstanding significance to contemporary art. Indeed, Ballard as one of the great surreal voices in British fiction and journalism, whose dystopian vision of nocturnal empty streetscapes, eerie skyscrapers, mangled bodies in crashed cars, airport hotels, and solitary individuals lost in the perennial data-drizzle of our televisual society, believed (like his exiled British contemporary Brion Gysin) that painting was 50 years ahead of writing. Ballard was our 'Edward Hopper' seer of technological angst and decay.

In this critical sense, artists as varied Francis Bacon, Robert Rauschenberg, Damien Hirst, Allen Jones, Tacita Dean, Helmut Newton, Jenny Saville, Paul Delvaux (one of Ballard's favourite painters), John Currin, Paul McCarthy, and the Chapman Brothers, amongst others, resonate numerous aesthetic and cultural connections with Ballard's seminal novel *Crash*. Ballard's nightmarish vision of modernity's surfaces concealing absurdity, horror and loneliness is, as Will Self reminds us in the show's prohibitively expensive and lavish catalogue, everyday fact today.[1]

A lot of the exhibiting artists in this multifaceted 'snapshot' appreciation focus on questions of fanciful effects, presentation and style rather than critical concept. Nevertheless, *Crash* is a necessary, timely and worthwhile exhibition, curated in association with the Ballard family and estate.

Across the Thames at the Tate Modern was the *Arshile Gorky* retrospective show (to 3 May), one of the highlights of my 2-week stay in London – 12 rooms of Gorky paintings and drawings attesting to his seminal importance as a pivotal link between Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism in America. Gorky's short, tragic life was characterised by obscurity, genocide (his Armenian mother died of starvation in 1919 as a consequence of the 1915 pogroms in Turkey), myth, and an unceasing experimental passion to create new forms. What is clear from the retrospective show is Gorky 's stature as one of the most remarkable American painters of the 20th century.

Curatorially, the Tate Modern has deftly presented the artist's intense existential trajectory as a painter born of little known ethnic origins as an Armenian who – true to his self-preserving instincts – took the name Arshile Gorky in homage to the Russian author Maxim Gorky. As a tormented, vulnerable bohemian painter who purposefully cultivated myths about his mysterious past and identity, there is a complex history

that shaped and haunted his art. Gorky's basic apprenticeship was based on studying paintings in the various museums of Boston and New York. Early on, he was influenced by artists such as Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso but gradually he found his own path and personality as a painter.

By the middle of the 1930s Gorky's style became looser when he started to shift away from Cubism. Under the influence of Surrealists like Jean Arp and Joan Miro, Gorky constructed an identifiable biomorphic style of abstraction. By the early 1940s Gorky worked on drawing in the countryside of Connecticut. Consequently, with his improvised landscape drawings Gorky's freer depictions of animal, plant and bodily forms denoted a much freer deployment of line and glimpses of exuberant colour.

Though Gorky did not dogmatically pursue the ideas of Surrealism, his technique had completely transformed during this period, and thanks to his supportive friendship with André Breton in 1944 Gorky reached a wider audience. One of his major works from this period, *Waterfall* (1943), embodies the artist's unique view of nature fusing the immediate with many concealed memories of childhood. Dogged by cancer, a studio fire and serious injuries sustained in a car crash, Gorky took his own life five years later in July of 1948.

Another remarkable exhibition was the *Irving Penn Portraits* show at the National Portrait Gallery (to 6 June), embracing the photographer's brilliant and powerful studio portraits from 1944 to 2007. Penn 's masterpiece studio portraits of artists, authors, actors and filmmakers range from Giorgio de Chirico (the only non-studio fan portrait taken of the artist in Rome), Peter Ustinov, Marlene Dietrich, Joan Miro and his daughter, Dolores (astonishing), Francis Bacon, Saul Steinberg (in a nose mask), Anna Magnani, Duke Ellington, amongst many other cultural luminaries of the 20th century. Each portrait is a poetic composition of incisive pictorial savvy, suggestive half-light, detail, perspective and scale paying minute telling

attention to the sitter's balance and weight in the overall context of the studio environment.

Gradually, Penn's extraordinary studio portraits focused on a closer examination of the sitter's face, thereby emphasising the subtle relationship of expression and gesture existing between him and his sitters. A Penn portrait persuasively convinces us that it is never photographed mid-flight or as an afterthought. On the contrary, it is meticulously constructed as a still life that categorically avoids the element of surprise. His distinctive pictorial language has been very influential on subsequent generations of photographers and designers.

Two other shows need to be singled out: the extremely popular *The Real Van Gogh: The Artist and his Letters* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts (23 January to 18 April). This was a spellbinding, comprehensive look at the painter's art and career through his enchanting illustrated letters to his younger brother, Theo, who gave him unstinting moral and financial support.

At the Serpentine Gallery was *Richard Hamilton: Moral Matters* (3 March to 25 April), a fairly successful overview of Hamilton's career from the 1950s onwards, in reference to his use of multiples in painting, photography, installation and industrial design. What emerges from this important show is Hamilton as a legendary exemplar of the 1950s Independent Group of artists and writers who reinvigorated the genres of portraiture (including an apt, witty piece of Tony Blair costumed as a cowboy) and history painting.

1. Self's 1995 book *Junk Mail* is indispensable reading for its lengthy conversation with Ballard amongst other pieces on William Burroughs and Martin Amis.

John Conomos was recently artist-resident at the Power Institute Research Residency at the Cite International des Arts, Paris. His latest publication (as co-editor with Brad Buckley) is *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School, the artist, the PhD and the Academy*, The Press of the Novia Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2009.

Artnotes

ASIA

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Art Beijing 2010

Hot on the heels of China International Gallery Exposition art fair (CIGE 2010), Art Beijing contemporary art fair promises to be bigger than ever, with representation from 80 galleries from over 15 countries including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Austria, Germany, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, Russia, USA, Italy. On- and off-site featured exhibitions, educational events and partnering institutions such as the Central Academy of Fine Art, the National Museum of China, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, the French Cultural Center. Goethe Institute and the Italian Institute of Culture reflect the profile of local and international direction of the fair. Dr Kate MacNeill from the University of Melbourne heads one project space as part of Art Beijing's special program this year to highlight the work of international artists who have directly engaged with China. MacNeill has invited Australian artist/writer Jayne Dyer to curate the exhibition *Here. there and now...* Art Beijing runs to 2 May at China Agricultural Exhibition Center, Beijing. www.artbeijing.net **RN**

EXPO 2010 Shanghai

Located in the Nanpu Bridge – Lupu Bridge region along both sides of the Huangpu River with the theme Better City, Better Life, the Expo 2010 Shanghai, China opens on 1 May – 31 Oct. The Expo aims high with over 200 participating countries and international organisations constructing showcase pavilions and displays, 70,000 volunteers, and an expected attendance of 70 million. The Expo is a platform for the exchange and promotion of ideas, successful practices and technologies of 'urban sustainable development' and discusses practices and innovations in terms of urbanisation. education and health care in rural areas of developing countries. www.en.expo2010.cn **JD**

Fat chat

FAT ART 2 is the current sequel to the *FAT ART (2009)* survey curated by Karen Smith at the Today Art Museum (TAM), Beijing. It expands upon the relationships between art and sound explored by the inaugural show, particularly in the context of pop and youth culture. *FAT ART 2,* curated by Dong Bingfeng, chief editor of *Contemporary Art & Investment*, includes work by Chinese Australian artist Laurens Tan, his works' soundtracks the result of a collaboration with French-American composer Daniel Ferreras. Until 16 May. Also at TAM is *Taking a Stance: 8 Critical Attitudes in Chinese & Dutch Architecture* until 13 May, thereafter at OCAT Art & Design Gallery, Shenzen from 26 June – 5 Aug. www.fatart.cn, www.todayartmuseum.com, & tas2010.org/web **NC**

Anne Graham in Beijing

Anne Graham, Sydney artist and Chair, Fine Art, at The University of Newcastle, is in Beijing for 3 months to the end of June on a Red Gate residency. She is focusing on 2 projects – constructing base garments for development back in Sydney, and undertaking interviews of Chinese migrant workers seeking employment in Beijing. The latter project considers issues of identity and displacement within this transient population. **JD**

1 Ben Quilty, *Witching Hour Ro*
(diptych). On show at ART HK 1
27 to 30 May. Al to be seen at Jan M

Up-and-coming

On 5 May a gala event at the Central Academy of Fine Art showcases student art and design work from the inaugural year of the International Foundation Course. Students in this intensive program will vie for selection to international universities in America, Britain, Europe and Australia. ifc.cafa.edu.cn **JD**

Challenging practice

The shake-up that has occurred since the market collapse in Chinese contemporary art over a year ago has stimulated many artists, writers and curators to investigate the current nature of practice, particularly in Beijing. 2 exhibitions which finished in April explored the authorship of contemporary practice and curating: *Jungle – A Close-Up Focus on Chinese Contemporary Art Trends* at Platform China Space A, and *Spread* at ShanghART Beijing. Issues such as the perceived rampant commercialism of the Chinese contemporary art market, the common practice of using fabricators and assistants to manufacture the works, and authenticity were commented upon and self-critiqued. *Spread* was a series of mixed-media installations by MadeIn, an art collaboration initiated by artist Xu Zhen. Like all MadeIn collaborations, the works 'take on history, politics, and the everyday; approaches informed as much by reality as by fiction'. Such exhibitions may lead to a very different international perception of contemporary Chinese art over the next few years. www.platformchina.org www.shanghartgallery.com **RN**

Ten Thousand Waves

In May ShanghART (Shanghai Gallery, www.shanghartgallery.com) features the 9-screen video installation work, *Ten Thousand Waves*, by

England-based artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien. Conceived and made over 3 years in China, the work sees Julien collaborating with some of China's leading artistic voices (Maggie Cheung, Zhao Tao, Wang Ping and Yang Fudong, for eg.) and a 100-strong Chinese cast and crew. *Ten Thousand Waves* combines fact, fiction and film essay genres against a background of Chinese history, legend and landscape to create a poetic meditation on global human migrations. **RN**

Ai Weiwei at Tate

Prominent Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is the next artist in the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall for the Unilever series (12 Oct. – 25 Apr. 2011), and its first artist from the Asia-Pacific region. In the past year, Ai Weiwei has created the installations *Remembering*, a memorial to schoolchildren who were victims in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, and *Soft Ground* in the Haus der Kunst in Munich. He has also had a solo show at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. **RN**

Kaohsiung Awards

Kaohsiung Awards 2010 features 50 artists at Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts until 19 June. After rounds of selection and review, 5 winners of the Kaohsiung Awards were selected along with 9 winners of Excellent Work Award, 34 winners of Honorable Mention, and 2 winners of Observer's Award. These annual awards attract many outstanding artists in Taiwan to contend for one of the highest honours in Taiwan's art circle. The winning works demonstrate different levels of artistic strength and diversity. **LY**

Ooh la LaChapelle

American photographer David LaChapelle's works are celebrated in an exhibition at MOCA Taipei until 30 May. LaChapelle is an accomplished artist in many fields such as fashion photography, contemporary art, direction of music videos and documentary films, and exhibition design. His peculiar, unmistakable style is characterised by glamorous aesthetics and dramatic tension, with inspiration from classical art history to contemporary street culture. The result is a series of spectacular works interwoven by past and present; a mixture of refined and popular tastes through which LaChapelle transcends market trends and common traditions. www.mocataipei.org.tw/ **LY**

Image map

Chang Tsai, a pioneer of Taiwanese documentary photography, went to Tokyo in 1934 to study photography for 2 years and was influenced by the New Photography movement there. *Image Map: Chiang Tsai Retrospective* at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum includes about 300 images reflecting his frank recording of everyday Taiwanese life, Shanghai street scenes from the 1950s, indigenous peoples, as well as his manuscripts, personal photographs, early albums and other treasured gems. From 11 May – 8 August. www.tfam.museum **NC**

Lurie

If you know Jim Jarmusch films such as *Down By Law*, *Stranger than Paradise*, and *Mystery Train*, John Lurie needs no introduction. After developing an intractable neurological illness in the late '90s, he was sidelined on the music and acting fronts, so turned increasingly to painting, with which he'd been engaged since the '80s. His first exhibition was in 2004 at Anton Kern Gallery, NYC. *You are Here* at The Watari Museum for Contemporary Art (Watari-um), Tokyo (to 16 May), and *Strange and Beautiful* at Galerie Sho Contemporary Art, Tokyo (to 23 May), together open a window onto one man's personalised, painterly world, full of absurdist humour. www.watarium.co.jp & www.g-sho.com **NC**

Pritzker power

Kazuo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, partners in the Tokyo-based architectural firm SANAA, have clinched the Pritzker Architecture Prize 2010. The official ceremony takes place 17 May on historic Ellis Island in New York, the pair receiving a $100K stash and bronze medallions. The duo have extensive experience designing art museums, including the New Museum of Contemporary Art in NYC, the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, and the recent Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, London. Sejima is also director of the upcoming Venice Biennale 12th International Architecture Exhibition running Aug. to Nov. **NC**

Some battlefield

That old appropriator-impersonator Yasumasa Morimura is back, this time with *Requiem – Art on top of the Battlefield*, the final instalment in his 4-chapter photographic *Requiem* series. A kind of 'hats off' to great artistic figures of the 20th century, this instalment sees his fancy-dress tributes extended to wider historical contexts, including dictators. At the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography until 19 May. www.syabi.com/details/morimura.html **NC**

Honking Kong

Sotheby's HK auctions last month showed the Asian art market on the upswing. Results for 'Modern & Contemporary Southeast Asian Paintings', '20th Century Chinese Art', 'Contemporary Asian Art', 'Fine Chinese Paintings' and 'Important Chinese Paintings from the Robert Chang Collection' lots saw hammer prices well above estimates, though short of the bubble fears that permeate the Chinese and HK real estate markets. *Bright Road* (1995) by Chinese painter Liu Ye sold for HKD19,140 000 (approx AUD 2,688,700), over three times its estimate. *On the Lake* (1994) by Yue Minjun sold for HKD14,660 000 (near AUD2,059 000), doubling its lower estimate. Many works by Japanese and Southeast Asian artists also fetched above-average prices. Analysts believe there's still plenty of room for upward movement, especially when compared to the exuberant, overheated Japanese market of the late 1980s. See Sotheby's e-catalogues at www.sothebys.com **NC**

Artnotes

Southeast Asia

Black and white

The well-publicised clashes between Han Chinese and minority Uighurs in China's Xinjiang regional capital, Urumqi, last year are a stepping stone to Chinese film director Xu Xin's 6-hour black-and-white documentary *Karamay*, which premiered at the recent 34th Hong Kong International Film Festival. Taking us back to 1994 and the region's western-area oil town of the same name, where close to 300 schoolchildren were engulfed in a theatre fire while performing for school officials, the death toll of 325 including teachers cut across ethnic lines, the victims being Han, Uighur and Kazakh. The HK screening is likely to be the only one on Chinese soil. www.hkiff.org.hk/eng/film/detail/34105.html **NC**

Motley crew

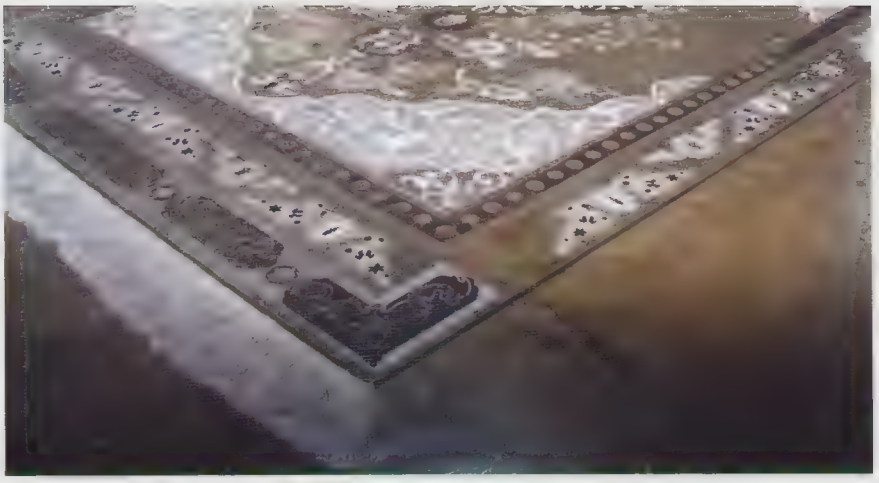
Guo Wei's recent portraits of urban adolescents take the form of freestanding wood relief pieces, their gallery installation emphasising their interrelationships. A motley crew, the crowd also includes unexpected figures such as Mao Zedong, Saddam Hussein, and Adolf Hitler. At Tang Contemporary Art, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong, until 15 May. www.tangcontemporary.com. **CA**

Hong Kong artists speak out

To Tsang, C.E. 2: Nothing but Development! is an exhibition of works that respond to the policies of the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Donald Tsang. It is the second such exhibition hosted by C&G Artpartment. The first took place in September 2007, also providing an opportunity for artists to express their opinions to Tsang, and giving him an opportunity not only to gain a better understanding of Hong Kong art, but to support these artists. Sadly, Mr. Tsang did not purchase any of their artworks. The current exhibition responds to recent policies on the proposed high-speed train to Guangzhou, the development of West Kowloon Cultural District, conservation of culture and heritage, and urban redevelopment. Curated by Gum Cheng Yee-Man, and showing at C&G Artpartment, Prince Edward, Kowloon. Ends 31 May. www.CandG-Artpartment.com. **CA**

Hope and Glory

Simon Birch is known for 'spectacular' and fantasy. Not surprising then that he has spearheaded the ambitious multi-media art project that transforms Hong Kong's 20K sq ft ArtisTree exhibition space in TaiKoo Place, Island East from 8 April – 30 May. Birch has brought together talents from artists to filmmakers to gaming wizards in what he is calling 'a conceptual circus' of linked installations. Among Birch's collaborators are artist Stanley Wong, photographer Wing Shya, British rock band UNKLE, filmmaker Eric Hu, designer Douglas Young, architect Paul Kember, and Beijing-based artist Cang Xin among others. *Hope and Glory* is deeply informed by the 'hero myth' that appears in different guises throughout history and across cultures – its patriotic anthem captured in the exhibition's title, and by the HK $2 million pledge by HKSAR Mega Events Fund supporting the project. www.thebirchfoundation.com **GF**



HK10

Billed as the hottest art fair on the cards this year, HK10 is seated at the 'gateway' to China and home to the world's auction houses. Among the mix of over 150 galleries in this Fair's 3rd edition is the return of Sydney galleries Breenspace, Conny Dietzschold Gallery, GRANTPIRRIE, Gallery Barry Keldoulis and Mori Gallery, along with newcomers to the fair Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art and Melbourne galleries Sutton Gallery and Tolarno Galleries. It will be interesting what happens next January when the Inaugural Art Stage Singapore at the new Marina Bay Sands steals the limelight. At the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from 27–30 May; Vernissage 26 May. www.hongkongartfair.com/ **GF**

Let's play

We play endlessly is a solo exhibition of paintings by Kenneth Tsang comprising colourfully rendered children's toys. Held at Epöch Coffee bar in Wanchai, Hong Kong, the exhibition is hosted by the 'mobile' MobArt Gallery whose exhibitions may 'pop up' anywhere in Hong Kong. Until 27 May. www.mobartgallery.com **CA**

Sacred ghoul

Philippine artist Louie Cordero hits NYC this month with his solo exhibition *Sacred Bones* at the Jonathan LeVine Gallery. Influenced by Western trash culture – B-movies, pulp horror, heavy metal, comics – Cordero's flat paintings and ghoulish sculptures take their cue from adolescent fantasy updated with a sophisticated cool of contemporary culture. It is his most ambitious exhibition since last year's celebrated solo, *Absolute Horror* (July 2009 at MO_Space, Manila). *Sacred Bones* until 12 June. www.jonathanlevinegallery.com **GF**

Traces

Imedla Cajipe Endaya was the first editor of the Philippine biannual publication *Pananaw*. It is only fitting the journal's 7th issue launch coincides with the opening of Cajipe Endaya's solo exhibition *Traces* at The University of the Philippines Vargas Museum, presented in cooperation with

Galleria Duemila. Collage, text, textile, and video installations come together in this survey that juxtaposes artworks with archival materials from the Vargas Museum. It continues a narrative of women, war and peace that has become signature to the now New York-based Cajipe Endaya. Until 8 August. www.vargasmuseum.org. **GF**

Stolen Bencabs

This month AndrewShire Gallery circulated a letter pertaining to the theft of 2 paintings by the National Philippine Artist BenCab, collected from their Gallery in Los Angeles and delivered to their Gallery in Singapore via the carrier FedEx. What is alarming is the tube was delivered with its end carefully sawn off. That this did not appear suspicious to the FedEx agent delivering the tube or their holding warehouse in Singapore is amazing. International auction houses have been notified of the theft. www.andrewshiregallery.com/ **GF**

Full of abundance

Abundant Australia: Highlights from the 11th Venice Architecture Biennale includes over 140 architectural models by Australian architects shown earlier at the Australian Pavilion in Venice. Asialink has partnered with the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) to tour the exhibition around Asia. Currently at the National Gallery of Malaysia, KL, it includes Sean Godsell Architects, Studio 505, Iredale Pederson Hook, Richard Goodwin, and Innovarchi among others. Chris Bosse (Director, Laboratory Vision for Architecture, Australia) & Ross Clark (Chief Operating Officer, AIA) will present lectures on 8 May at the exhibition venue. Until 16 May. **NC**

New Zealand

Sue.gardiner@xtra.co.nz

Timely Drummond revisit

The first comprehensive survey exhibition of work by Andrew Drummond opens at the Christchurch Art Gallery from 14 May – 5 Sept. Focusing on the period between 1980 and 2010, the exhibition will explore Andrew Drummond's rich and diverse practice, which spans performance art, sculpture, installation, drawing, photography and technology. Drummond is renowned for producing engaging and dynamic large-scale, mixed-media works that explore themes relating to the land and the human body, machines and movement. Born in '51, Drummond was influenced by his time in Europe and meeting Joseph Beuys. Drummond returned to New Zealand, and undertook a series of controversial performance works, donning his trademark white boiler suit. From 1992–2003 he was senior lecturer in sculpture at the University of Canterbury, and he also took part in the very early Mildura Sculpture Festivals. www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz

Auckland photo festival

This annual event is in 2 sections this year – the Signature program which encompasses 25 exhibitions in Auckland galleries plus key events; and a Fringe program featuring 44 exhibitions throughout Auckland and online. Key Signature program exhibitions include *Visible Evidence*, a documentary on photography by Leon Narby at the Film Archive 3–30 June, and Gow Langsford Gallery presenting *3x1* weekly exhibitions with Bruce Jarvis (week 1), Simon Devitt (week 2), and Patrick Reynolds (week 3) from 25 May – 12 June. Festival runs 4–27 June. www.photographyfestival.org.nz

Gallery and Museum news

It seems City Art Rooms is due for closure in Lorne Street, Auckland City, with curator Young Sun Han leaving Auckland to take sabbatical in the USA and Canada, but the exhibition program continues at least until July with John Hurrell of eyeConTACT exhibition review blog fame (eyecontactartforum.blogspot.com) in his curiously titled show *Expurgating Content in favour of the Ludic*, 11 May – 5 June, followed

by the work of Matt Maloy, 8 June – 1 July ... Auckland Museum is undergoing more change with the recent resignation of director Vanda Vitali. Ex-director Rodney Wilson is standing in ... People are still talking about the wonderful artist's talk given by Mike Parr at George Fraser Gallery during the Auckland Triennial opening weekend (see Triennial review p. 50) ... Govett Brewster turned 40 in March with a huge party to celebrate which included street performances, music, light shows by Tim Gruchy and exhibition highlights.

Empty Spaces full of Art

Curators Mark Amery and Sophie Jerram have launched The Letting Space Project in April this year, commissioning 2 new projects. They plan for a public art program in Wellington in 2010 that seeks to transform the relationship between artists, property developers and their city. The first temporary work is by sound artist Dugal McKinnon which opened on 18 April in a retail space owned by The Wellington Company. Entitled *Popular Archeology* it features a choir of 36 cassette tape loops playing fragments of hit songs, from each year the audio cassette was in its retail prime of life. The second project, opening 21 May, is *Free Shop* by Kim Paton, at 38 Ghuznee Street, at a site currently owned by supermarket chain Foodstuffs. This work's basic economic principle is the redistribution of valid produce otherwise deemed waste. www.lettingspace.org.nz

Don Peebles ONZM (1922-2010)

Te Papa blog writer William McAloon reported on the death of painter and teacher Don Peebles, who passed away at his Christchurch home, aged 88, on Saturday 27 March. As McAloon writes, 'The Arts Foundation of NZ made him an Icon in 2007, one of 20 individuals recognised for their life-long achievement'. In the '50s Peebles spent time in Australia studying under John Passmore at the Julian Ashton School of Arts in Sydney. His work is well represented in public collections.

Playful art

At the Adam Art Gallery, Wellington from 8 May – 25 July is *Play On (Sound Check 1)*, the first of a series of curated exhibitions designed to explore some of the intersections between sound and art. It will bring together 4 major works produced in the 1990s by NZ contemporary artists who each use aspects of popular music as a metaphor for thinking about art and art history, together with a newly commissioned work by Auckland based photographer Ava Seymour based on her own research into the history of popular music. www.adamartgallery.org.nz

Dunedin cuts its teeth

A fledgling team of public art planners are starting to tackle the big issues of rejuvenating a city public art program calling for an urgent review of the Council's outmoded public arts policy.

This solid and independent group is continuing to commission permanent works, and launched their latest project in April with the installation of Regan Gentry's *Harbour Mouth Molars*, a project initiated in 2008. 6 huge Oamaru stone 'molars' have been installed at a harbour side reserve in Dunedin's Kitchener Street.

Feeling un-nerved?

The NZ exhibition *Unnerved: The New Zealand Project* opens at GoMA, Queensland Art Gallery from 1 May – 4 July. Major sculptures by Michael Parekowhai, installations by Lisa Reihana and Michael Stevenson, and photographic series by Yvonne Todd, Anne Noble and Greg Semu will feature alongside video art by Sriwhana Spong and Nathan Pohio. Also included are 20 drawings by Lorene Taurerewa – new acquisitions into the QAG Collection. The exhibition travels to the National Gallery of Victoria in late 2010.

Seeing Double

DOUBLE VISION: When Artists Collaborate is an exhibition at Pataka Museum, Porirua from 29 May – 11 Sept., which focuses on collaborating artist partnerships including Hannah Beehre and Aaron Beehre, Madeleine Child and Philip Jarvis, Yoshiko Nakahara and Shintaro Nakahara, Samantha Mitchell and Gavin Hurley, Ngataiharuru Taepa, Saffron Te Rata and Hemi McGregor, Robin White and Leba Toki and Marcus Williams and Susan Jowsey. www.pataka.org.nz

Rugby in the museum

Te Manawa Museum, in Palmerston North, which includes a gallery, a museum and science complex has become the new home of the National Rugby Museum, to be housed in a new, purpose-built, 500m2 gallery space inside the Museum Complex and open by mid-2011, the date of the Rugby World Cup. Te Manawa Chief Executive Steven Fox comes to the job from roles at 2 of Australia's national cultural institutions – Old Parliament House and the National Museum of Australia. www.temanawa.co.nz

Letter from Auckland Triennial

GENEVIEVE O'CALLAGHAN

A few weeks out from my visit to the 4th Auckland Triennial and the theme is still floating through my mind. Positioning itself as a serious examination and discussion of risk and adventure in contemporary art, *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon* presents thought-provoking artists but, overall, has the feeling of unrealised potential.

Curator Natasha Conland coined the title for its perspectival implications, describing it as a condition for viewing.[1] In part a response to the devastating Global Financial Crisis (GFC), the Triennial's theme is pregnant with promise: not only is the balloon wondrous yet impractical, graceful yet clumsy, it's filled with metaphor: the ongoing exploration of materiality, the history and experience of adventure, political spaces without polarity, physical freedoms, and alternate economic and ecological structures. Perhaps in realisation of the overshadowing strength of its symbolism, Conland asks catalogue readers not to make too much of the Triennial's title.

A range of artists explore the materiality of their immediate surroundings, and while Mike Parr and Shilpa Gupta seem best to enunciate this concept, others miss the mark. Parr is represented by two early films and an installation of an imagined performance. A seemingly inane documentation of the assisted journey of a camera over a hill, *Pushing a video camera over a hill* (1971) shows the drama and poetry of small acts. The spectacle of Gupta's hovering mass of microphones, *Singing Cloud* (2008–09), referencing Indian railway stations in response to the 2008 Mumbai terrorist bombings, makes for one of the show's most memorable pieces.

Performance art has long connoted risk and adventure, and an engagement with the body is addressed by artists Laresa Kosloff, Walid Sadek and Alicia Frankovich. In a considered and refreshing departure from performance work from the 1960s-'90s, Conland chose Parr's early work, and opted for a sculptural piece by Frankovich over her well-known immersive performance pieces.

The ongoing collaboration *Talanoa: Walk the Talk* (2009–10), instigated, organised, directed and documented by Shigeyuki Kihara, was a unique take on the inherent adventure of performance. While its opening weekend rendition, bringing together the Ruapotaka Marae Kapa Haka Group and the Haere Mai Taiko Japanese Drummers, was not that risky, given Kihara's Polynesian and Japanese heritage, its earlier incarnations were more daring. These included the collaborations of Australian Aboriginal musicians and dancers, Scottish drummers, a Cook Island dance group and Indian performers. Kihara believes the point is in the connections made towards the performance and continued through discussion.

Tino Seghal's *Instead of allowing something to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things* (2000) explores physical freedom in an entirely different way. Seghal, a Berlin-based British artist, does not like to fly and to participate in *Last Ride* he taught his dance to a colleague, engaging her to audition and direct the dancers. This exchange and transferral of artistic licence reveals an extension of authorship; the work, a sole dancer moving across the gallery floor, makes us think about the nature and 'authenticity' of an artwork.

In relation to the GFC, the Triennial engages artists who deal with alternative ecological and economic structures. Learning Site, an artist collective interested in sustainability, green economies and education, designed a decomposing dwelling for the exhibition, which may or may not end up a pile of dirt. *The House of Economy* (2010) sits at the ground floor entrance to the Auckland Art Gallery and was, unfortunately, easily overlooked. One of the most resolved works, Michael Stevenson's *On How Things Behave* (2010) tells six stories relating to local and global economies. In a pared-back audio-visual language, employing repetitive circular forms and a monotone narration, Stevenson's message is speculative and relevant. Jorge Macchi's video, *12 Short Songs* (2009), shows a music box playing newspaper headlines from the 2008 economic crash via hole-punched cards. The work is interesting but you long to see the actual music box rather than its image. As these artists ponder solutions to failing economies it's ironic that the Triennial is made up of so many commissioned artworks.

Part of the selection process saw Conland travelling the lateral axis of the globe and encountering the Iranian artists Shahab Fotouhi and Mahmoud Bakshi, who provide an enlightening perspective. Fotouhi's installation tracks the arrival of Ayatollah Khomeini at Martyr Square following the 1979 revolution and displays confronting footage of a hysterical mob, which has never been screened unedited in Iran. Unfortunately Bakshi's work, *Sunsets* (2010), a sculptural monument to dusk hour in Iran, was still being installed during the opening weekend, a glaring oversight by Triennial organisers and a huge disappointment for both artist and audience. Both works address the freedom to make political statements, and other artists understood through this framework are Richard Bell, represented in two video works, Garrett Phelan, who employs subversive materials such as zines and underground radio, and Sharon Hayes. Hayes's work, *Everything Else Has Failed! Don't You Think It's Time For Love?* (2007), relays, via audio and posters, a performance in which she stood outside New York's United Bank of Switzerland and read aloud love letters. Her voice, full of desperation and torment, is played softly, forcing you to listen more closely.

Last Ride harbours the theme of 'adventure', its history and experience, with artists like Alex Monteith, Tom Nicholson and Marine Hugonnier. Monteith's epic *Red Sessions* (2009–10) and Hugonnier's three films impress in scope but are an uninspiring choice. Nicholson's heuristic uncovering of Burke and Wills' attempt at traversing the vertical length of Australia is an intriguing work but gets lost in its placement at Shed 6, the most wanting of the Triennial's five venues.

The Triennial's lack of Māori representation was a contentious point raised in talks and panel discussions over the opening weekend. Given the adventurous, sea-faring origins of the culture, Māori artists seem an obvious choice for the overall theme; when pressed, Triennial organisers and Conland explained that after extensive research they concluded that the younger Māori generation were working within unrelated topics.[2]

A bit like a real-life balloon ride which oscillates between smooth floating and awkward landing, *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon* has moments of both eloquence and deflation.

1. Natasha Conland, 'Last ride in a hot air balloon' from *The 4th Auckland Art Triennial: last ride in a hot air balloon*, 2010, exhibition catalogue, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, p. 19. Unless otherwise indicated, all Conland-related comments are from this catalogue.
2. Interview with Natasha Conland, 28 March 2010.

Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon continues across five venues in Auckland until 20 June 2010. www.aucklandtriennial.com

Genevieve O'Callaghan is an independent writer and editor based in Sydney.

Artnotes

Pacific

Bridgeman's big balls

Brisbane-based artist Eric Bridgman is on fire with 2 exhibitions running this month. If you're quick you'll catch *New Photographs From Kokwara Trail* (4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney until 8 May). These works are inspired by Bridgeman's travels through his mother's country (Chimbu [Simbu] Province, PNG), in which he 'became increasingly conscious of his own "white" Australian presence, and began to recognise the impact of photography on representations of national and cultural identity in PNG'. Bridgeman will also be exhibiting works on paper titled *Big League Balls* (Blindside Gallery, Melbourne 15–30 May) as part of Next Wave Festival. Interrogating the fundamental mechanics of gender, race and sexuality prevalent in Australian football culture, Bridgeman presents the football star as a fictional cartoon character, a sexual deviant and eroticised homosexual athlete, thus revealing football's underlying laws of masculinity and performance. For a sneak online peak at works from *Big League Balls* (warning – material may offend!), go to www.ericbridgeman.com

Just Like Home

Australian-based New Britain (PNG)-born artist Lisa Hilli is exhibiting *Just Like Home,* a 'multilayered work combining documentary video, sculptural installation, demonstration and audience participation' (Nexus Multicultural Arts, Adelaide, 20 May – 26 June; travelling to the Colac Otways Performing Arts and Cultural Centre, 1–24 July; and Darwin and Elcho Island later in the year). Exhibition catalogue author Torika Bolatagici explains, 'The video component features Lisa's mother Cathy, cooking a traditional Tolai dish, called *I gir*, in a suburban Brisbane backyard … the video monitor surrounded by tall banana palm sculptures made completely with tin foil,' (which replaces the banana leaves in which food was traditionally cooked). '*Just Like Home* reminds us of the importance of tradition and demonstrates the modification and preservation of Pacific Island culture in a suburban Australian context.'

Pacific Craft Talk

That tireless supporter of craft, Kevin Murray, has just added a Pacific forum to his Craft Talk webpage. Murray is intent on uniting the world through craft, and it is great to see a web-forum where Pacific craft is held in the highest regard. Why not join the discussion? crafttalk.ning.com

Pule arrives

City Gallery Wellington is exhibiting the first monographic exhibition by Auckland-based Niuean artist John Pule. Surveying 20 years of Pule's extraordinary career, *Hauaga* (*Arrivals*) (29 May – 12 September) features 23 large works on canvas as well as some of Pule's greatest suites of works on paper. These include the lithographic series *Restless Spirit* and *Love Poems*, which also embody Pule's practice as a writer. Alongside the exhibition, Otago University Press/City Gallery Wellington are producing a large-scale monograph on Pule's work. It features colour plates of over 100 works and includes major essays by Nicholas Thomas, Peter Brunt, Gregory O'Brien and writings by Pule himself. City Gallery Wellington says that *Hauaga* 'demonstrates how Pule's work stretches across art forms and cultures, drawing from an endlessly rich range of historical and present-days sources from the Pacific, as well as Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond'.

Pacific Arts Summit

Ema Tavola of Fresh Gallery Otara reports that Manukau City Council is running a Pacific Arts Summit with a series of events celebrating the Pacific arts communities of South Auckland and Pacific arts in general. The central event is Fresh Gallery Otara's 4th Anniversary, which is being marked with a new solo exhibition, *Blood's Thicker Than Mud*, by Tongan/Norwegian multi-media artist Terry Koloamatangi Klavenes. Other highlights include *Curating the Pacific Art Forum* (21 May) aimed at stimulating dialogue around the unique contribution Pacific people make to the curatorial sector; and *Tongan Style - Artist Talks* (8 May) with Tongan curators Manuēsina Māhina and Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai in conversation with embroiders and crochet artists involved in the exhibition *Tongan Style*.

Symposium looks at future

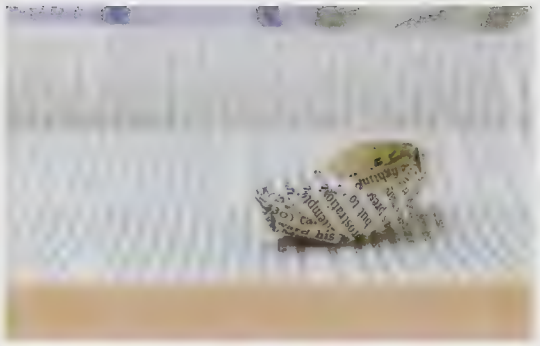
Start planning for the 10th Pacific Arts Association's international symposium which has the theme Pacific Art in the 21st century: Museums, New Global Communities and Future Trends, and takes place in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, from 9–11 August. Highlighting issues surrounding the creation, dispersal, possession, repatriation, stewardship and interpretation of Pacific art in the 21st century, the symposium will feature NZ artists Filani Macassey, Fono McCarthy, Siliga Setoga, Angela Tiatia, Moses Viliamu and Glenda Vilisoni, among many others. **SG**

New Caledonia (Bio)diversité

At the Tjibaou Centre, sculptor Armand Goroboredjo and installation artist Evelyne Meouma (hailing from the Northern provinces of Poindimié and Ouégoa respectively) have undertaken a residency to produce works that invite the viewer to contemplate the fragility of our environment. The resulting exhibition *Two Views of (Bio)Diversity*, is currently showing in the Katitara Gallery (until 20 June). Both of the artists are associated with the l'EMI (Ecole du Multimédia et de l'Image) based in Koné.

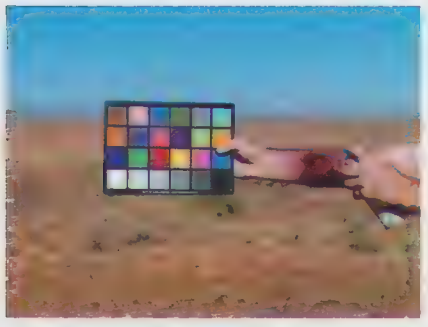
Contemporary covers

In 2002 under the editorship of Vilsoni Hereniko, the leading scholarly journal *The Contemporary Pacific* took to placing works by contemporary Pacific Islander artists on their front covers. Aside from promoting artists from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, New Zealand, Guam, Solomon Islands, Norfolk Island, Samoa, and Hawai'i, this decision made it one of the best looking current affairs journals around. To help celebrate 60 years of Pacific Islander studies at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa (where *TCP* is edited), an exhibition featuring every cover from 2003 to the present will be shown in the Elevator Gallery (University of Hawai'i Library at Manoa, until 22 May). In lieu of attending the exhibition, I will be ordering the last 15 copies of *The Contemporary Pacific* at the National Library of Australia!



1 Simryn Gill, *Paper* [illegible] *Britannica* [illegible] 7 is showing [illegible] n Art, Melbourne [illegible]

2 Nana Ohnesorge, *Dead Meat*, 2010. A finalist in the *Sulman Prize 2010*. Showing until 30 May at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au



3 Shaun Gladwell, *Colour Test, Mundi Mundi Plains (Red)*, 2009, pigment print on archival paper. Photograph by Josh Raymond, image courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery. *Shaun Gladwell' Interior Linework Interceptor Intersection*, is showing at Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, and includes his Venice Biennale presentation, until 6 May. campbe [illegible]

National

Indigenous art code of conduct

Registration has opened for art dealers, agents, galleries and arts centres to register their interest in becoming signatories to the Indigenous Australian Art Commercial Code of Conduct. The recently formed Code Administration Committee is a voluntary, independent industry body comprised of representatives from across the industry including dealers, Indigenous artists, artist resource organisations and independent professionals, chaired by Ron Merkel QC, with Richard England as deputy chair. Implementation of this Code was a key recommendation of a 2007 Senate Inquiry report into the Indigenous visual arts and craft sector. The Code was developed in consultation with the sector and has received its widespread support. Arts Minister Peter Garrett has announced government funding of $600K over 3 years to assist with its implementation. According to Garrett, 'the Code will, for the first time, provide a national set of standards for transactions between agents, artists and dealers in the Indigenous visual arts industry'. www.indigenousartcode.org

Art of war

Lyndell Brown and Charles Green's touring exhibition *Framing Conflict: Iraq and Afghanistan* finally comes 'home' to the Australian War Memorial (from 21 May) after a marathon tour through Victoria, NSW and Queensland. The exhibition dates from Brown and Green's stint as Official War Artists in 2007, based in Afghanistan and the Middle East. A compelling mix of photography and paintings, the show moves to Adelaide's Flinders University Art Museum in October.

Eagerly awaited are results from the 2009 tours of duty by Shaun Gladwell (Afghanistan) and eX de Medici (Solomon Islands). The AWM's commissions are becoming markedly more adventurous, emboldened no doubt by the successful tours of Rick Amor, John Cattapan and Wendy Sharpe to East Timor in 2008. Gladwell's deployment would have been a disappointment to self-styled 'bad boy' Adam Cullen, who last year announced he'd applied for the Afghanistan gig. 'I'd like to see some conflict, as opposed to just staying in an isolated studio like some bourgeois fool. I was told that if I was that close I'd have to wear armour and all that stuff, but that's half the buzz,' Cullen told ABC (NT) *Stateline's* Sarah Dingle. Beyond the work of Official War Artists, the AWM's lively exhibitions and touring program includes *Sidney Nolan: The Gallipoli Series* (touring nationally through April 2012), *Animals in War* (touring through June 2011) and the popular *Love and War* until 11 May at the AWM.

The 27th Ned Kelly

Talking of Sidney Nolan, the $5.4 million paid by the Art Gallery of NSW trustees (with money from the estate of James Gleeson and Frank O'Keefe) for *First Class Marksman* (1946) has set a new record for an Australian work, beating the $3.48 million paid for Brett Whiteley's *The Olgas for Ernest Giles* in 2007. The sale quadrupled Nolan's previous highest price at auction – $1.3m for *Death of Constable Scanlon* in 2000. The hammer fell at $4.5 million, plus a 20% buyer's premium of $900k. Ouch!

First Class Marksman was the only one of a series of 27 Ned Kelly paintings (first shown at Melbourne's Velasquez Gallery in 1948) which the artist kept for himself. The other 26 have long been owned by the National Gallery of Australia, which was initially thought to be the successful mystery telephone bidder. However, as AGNSW Director Edmund Capon trumpeted the coup, the NGA said it had not participated, but had failed in a bid to secure the artwork before auction, no doubt intent on including this work in its recently opened new Nolan gallery which features this series. The Vizard Foundation, which paid a mere $400K for the work in 1992, announced that the tax-free proceeds of the sale would go to the University of Melbourne to train Indigenous curators and to provide artistic and financial support for local artists.

Namatjira Project

Big hART's *The Namatjira Project*, announced in August last year to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Western Arrernte artist's death, is moving ahead with the launch of its Araluen Centre program in late February, and creative development workshops in Alice Springs and Hermannsburg in March. The Big hART team, Namatjira family members and artists from the Ngurratjuta Many Hands Art Centre are working together to develop ideas for the script, music and set design. The workshops will culminate in an original theatrical work and accompanying watercolour exhibition, to be presented 'in-progress' at the Araluen Centre, Alice Springs from 7–8 August, followed by a season at Sydney's Belvoir Street Theatre from 25 Sept. – 7 Nov. The accompanying watercolour exhibition will also be on display in Sydney at the Birrung Gallery, Wooloomooloo. www.namatjira.bighart.org

Photography then and now

2 new exhibitions open at Canberra's National Portrait Gallery in May. *Husbands & Wives* (from 6 May) offers a glimpse at the private lives of Australian couples and families through rare photographic portraits from the 19th century. *Present Tense: An imagined grammar of portraiture in the digital age* (from 22 May) explores the impact on portraiture of the digital revolution of the 1980s-1990s, exploring how new ways of imaging reflect the individual in this digital world.

Waldron wins Glover

Cairns-based Ian Waldron has won the $35K acquisitive Glover Prize, for *Walach Dhaarr (Cockle Creek)*. The first Indigenous Australian to win, Waldron's painting was selected from 43 finalists by panelists Imants Tillers, Maudie Palmer and Jane Stewart.The large-scale work depicts an encounter between French explorers and the Aboriginal tribes at Cockle Creek in Tasmania. The richest landscape prize in the country is awarded annually for a new painting depicting the Tasmanian landscape.

Emeritus awards

Artist Ken Unsworth AM has received the $40K Australia Council for the Arts Emeritus Award. with collector and benefactor Ann Lewis AO receiving the $10K Emeritus Medal. Nominations for the 2011 honours close on 3 August.

Artnotes

Queensland

Digital (inter)faces

The intersection of humanity and technology is the subject of some happenings at QUT. *Face to Face: Portraiture in a Digital Age* explores the evolution of the portrait and introduces the ideal of 'technologising' human identity through a suite of screen-based work. Artists in the show include Denis Beaubois, Adam Nash & Mami Yamanaka, John Tonkin, David Rosetzky, Angelica Mesiti, Anna Davis & Jason Gee, Rachel Scott and Stelarc. Until 15 May, The Block, QUT Creative Industries Precinct. Performance artist Stelarc will give 2 talks on the extension of the body and its relationship with technology through human-machine interfaces: 12 May at The Block, 13 May at QUT Art Museum, Gardens Point campus. artmuseum@qut.edu.au

Boyzone

The 6th instalment of artist-run-initiative The Wandering Room's window box project, *Bad Boys Club*, is a large group show which 'seeks to address an imbalance of female artists in previous and upcoming Wandering Room shows' by exploring the 'cult of personality' and the figure of the male artist. Artists include Jasmine Coleman, Patrick King, Nat Koyama, Sam Sharman, Eric Rossi, and Gordon Hookey. Window displays at 99 Melbourne Street, South Brisbane, 7 May – 1 June. www.thewanderingroom.org

Riot girls

There's a new gang in town: LEVEL artist-run initiative, showcasing the work of Australian women artists. *LEVEL* the exhibition features new works by 10 artists: Beata Batorowicz, Lauren Brincat, Antoinette J Citizen, Courtney Coombs, Rachael Haynes, Alice Lang, Zoe Porter, Kate Rhode, Claire Robertson and Angela Rossito. Together with the catalogue, featuring essays by Angela Goddard, Alison Kubler and Courtney Pedersen, the exhibition engages in the conversations around gender and practice in Australia today. LEVEL is co-directed by Brisbane-based artists Courtney Coombs, Alice Lang and Rachael Haynes, who together are 'responding to the call for recognition, support and dialogue for female emerging and early career artists' through the creation of 'a dynamic community for female visual artists'. They're residing at 11 Stratton Street, Newstead; exhibition runs 7 May – 4 June. www.levelari.org

Parks and wildlife

Artist Gary Carsley's digital interventions turn photographs of internationally significant parklands into highly constructed faux wood-grain based images resembling complex intarsia. Queensland College of Art Gallery is staging *A Bush Knot*, a major show of Carsley's 'Draguerrotypes', which 'unlock the cultural and historical memories embedded in parkscapes' through transformative processes the artist calls 'karaoke-ing'. Author Matthew Condon is collaborating with Carsley to write the 'true history' for the site of *A Bush Knot*. Until 30 May, QCA Gallery, Griffith University.

www.griffith.edu.au/visual-creative-arts/griffith-artworks/queensland-college-art-gallery

Fantastic lights

Get set for more Gold Coast glamour with 19 Karen's new emerging artist project, *Lightmares*. Guest artist Mymo, known for reworking the visual language of graffiti, will join emerging Australian artists Vitor Dos Santos, Leigh Pearson, Georg Whelan, Abigael Whittaker, Hannah Smith, Susan Simonini, Will Duncan, Fiona Kennedy, Altoft, Jesse Dolman and Michael Candy. Including a professional development residency, exhibition workshop and live wall painting event, *Lightmares* takes a fresh look at cultural development and exchanges between local and international artists and the Gold Coast community. Opening 22 May – 19 June. www.19karen.com.au

Textual experimentation

In *Unravel*, collaborative artists DavisThomas (Adrian Davis and Lubi Thomas) ambitiously house immense paper rolls in the gallery space, intervening in spatial and causal relations and creating a promise of 'material release'. At No Frills Gallery, Edward Street, 5–22 May. nofrillsari.org

MAAP of the Republic

Multimedia magnificos MAAP has declared its program of public and site-specific art MAAP Republic. To make it official, they have installed Paul Brown's *Kinetic Painting 4^15: Studies in Perception* on a 9x1.5m purpose-built projection space at South Bank (ABI Group Building, Stanley Street Plaza in the Parklands). In this installation, Brown uses an artist-created software program, based on Cellular Automata (Artificial Life), to generate randomised and evolving geometric forms. The works reference European kinetic, conceptual and systems art, as well as an aesthetic derived from tiling and patterns of symmetry. MAAP is seeking proposals from other artists for this 9x1.5m projection space format, or for adaptation for satellite sites. Expressions of interest to info@maap.org.au

Second lives

Shane Morris's artworks re-tool old boxes and salvaged wooden boards into small sacred objects and explore the historical resonances of these assemblages. *Angels & Boxes*, at Cell Art space, Cairns, until 4 June; launches 7 May ... Mary Elizabeth Barron enlivens old

clothes, transforming them from utilitarian items into their second life as art. At Logan Art Gallery, until 22 May. www.logan.qld.gov.au

Don't miss:

Extra Fins, a show of new work by Tim Plaisted, at Box Copy, Margaret Street, Brisbane. Until 15 May. www.boxcopy.org ... Works produced over 6 decades by painter and printmaker Lawrence Daws. Landscape and figuration are the focus of *The Promised Land*, a major touring exhibition, curated by Bettina Macaulay, which reflects the artist's personal interest in 20th century philosophy, tarot and alchemy ... Also at QUT Art Museum is neo-punk painter Dan Brock, whose large-scale paintings reflect a provisional, subversive aesthetic, and the ukiyo-e woodblock print exhibition, *Heroes and Magicians: Adventures in the Floating World*, curated by Emma Cain. Until 27 June, QUT Art Museum. www.artmuseum.qut.com ... Ken Jacobs's stroboscopic video installations and Peter Madden's complex assemblages are on display until 29 May at the IMA. Concluding the screening program of the artist's *Star Spangled to Death* is a rare showing of Jacobs's legendary avant-garde film from 1969, *Tom Tom The Piper's Son*, on 22 May.

NSW

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Biennale of Sydney

The 17th Biennale of Sydney (BoS), Australia's largest contemporary visual arts event, will be presented free to the public from 12 May – 1 Aug. Artistic Director David Elliott has based the curatorial theme on The Beauty of Distance: Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age, with recent and new works by Australian and international artists at Sydney's leading cultural institutions, contemporary art spaces and heritage sites. Cockatoo Island returns as a major exhibition venue, and will feature works, many site-specific, by approximately 50 artists including: Chinese-born, New York-based artist Cai Guo-Qiang with his large-scale, 9-car installation *In Inopportune: Stage One* (2004), and Japanese artist Hiroshi Sugimoto's new 'electric' installation. The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) will devote its entire gallery space to the Biennale of Sydney, with one of its largest galleries to be filled with 110 *larrakitj* (memorial poles) created by 41 Yolngu artists from North East Arnhem Land between 1998 and 2009. The 17th BoS will be dedicated to the life and continuing influence of Nick Waterlow OAM; its keynote address will henceforth be named in Nick Waterlow's memory. www.biennaleofsydney.com.au

Roger Ballen *Boarding House*

To coincide with South African-based photographer Roger Ballen's BoS participation is an exhibition of his most recent series, *Boarding House*, at Stills Gallery, Paddington, to 29 May, alongside a selection of works from his earlier *Outland* series. Roger Ballen will give an artist talk at Stills Gallery, Saturday 15 May at 2pm.

SafARI in May

SafARI 2010 champions emerging artists and artist-run spaces during the first 3 weeks of the BoS. 16 emerging artists will be presented across 4 of Sydney's Artist-Run Initiative (ARI) spaces: MOP Projects (Chippendale), Firstdraft (Surry Hills), Locksmith Project Space (Alexandria) and Serial Space (Chippendale). www.safari.org.au

Heady festival

The inaugural Head On Photo Festival will take place in Sydney to 5 June. This photo festival is an initiative involving galleries, restaurants and cafes around Sydney exhibiting local and international photography. Public galleries, including the Museum of Sydney and the Manly Art Gallery, will take part, as well as many commercial galleries. Centreing on the flagship Head On Portrait Photography Prize, the festival features a retrospective of Oculi, one of Australia's top photojournalist collectives, a retrospective of the late Rennie Ellis, a two-day seminar, a mini trade show. and master classes with world-class photographers. www.headon.com.au

The Tao of Now

The White Rabbit Gallery's current exhibition, *The Tao of Now*, presents over 40 artists with 60 works and an array of up-to-the-minute themes. Highlights include: the domestic interiors of Dong Yuan, small rooms made up entirely of *trompe l'oeil* paintings; Qin Fengling's *Scaffold*, a huge wood-on-canvas structure swarming with figures made of paint squeezed straight from the tube; and Shi Jindian's motorbike and sidecar crocheted from blue stainless steel. White Rabbit has recently launched a Film Club showing classic and popular Chinese films the first Sunday of each month in their new theatrette.

Central Western winners

The Calleen Art Award is an acquisitive award for painting (worth $12K in prizemonies), open to artists living in Australia. It was established in 1977 through the support of Cowra resident and art patron Mrs Patricia Fagan OAM. The Central West Regional Artists Award is a non-acquisitive award for painting and drawing. It was established in 2009 by the Cowra Regional Art Gallery in partnership with the generous support of a private donor. This $2K award is open to artists living in the local government areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western Region, Oberon, Orange, Parkes and Wellington. Both finalist exhibitions are presented at Cowra Regional Art Gallery, to 23 May.

McKenna at Murrurundi

While best known for work observing and chronicling urban and suburban environments, Noel McKenna's practice has also revealed an interest in regional communities and country landscapes. This new exhibition is the result of Noel McKenna's recent visits to the Upper Hunter region of New South Wales and continues his long-term interest in horses and horse racing. Michael Reid Gallery presents the exhibition at Murrurundi (45km north of Scone) in conjunction with Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, to 30 May.

Michael Kempson at Flinders St

Michael Kempson is Head of Printmaking Studies and Director of Cicada Press, College of Fine Arts, Uni of NSW. Kempson develops local, regional and international dialogues through teaching and print exchange exhibitions, so it's a rare event to see his own work on exhibition in a solo show spanning work from the past 3 years. Like McKenna, Kempson's métier is the urban and suburban narrative, told with a fairly parched sense of humour. At Flinders Street Gallery, Surry Hills, 6–29 May. www.flindersstreetgallery.com

You bewdy!

Artspace's new publication, *Conceptual Beauty: Perspectives on Australian Contemporary Art*, was launched in Sydney in April by Julie Ewington, Head of Australian Art at Queensland Art Gallery. *Conceptual Beauty* is 'a collection of essays representative of a particular moment in contemporary Australian art'. The publication, by University of Western Sydney's Dr Jacqueline Millner, includes essays on the work of Robyn Backen, Barbara Campbell, Maria Cruz, Anne Ferran, Adam Geczy, Bronia Iwanczak, Julie Rrap, Robyn Stacey, Ben Quilty, Vanila Netto, David Noonan, Mike Parr, Sue Pedley, Monika Tichacek Patricia Piccinini and Ruth Watson amongst others. artspace@artspace.org.au

Archibald, Wynne & Sulman

Congratulations to Sam Leach, 2010 Archibald Prize *and* Wynne Prize winner for his intimate portrait of singer/songwriter Tim Minchin, and his equally small work *Proposal for landscaped cosmos*. Leach is only the 3rd artist to have won both prizes in the same year (after William Dobell in 1948, and Brett Whiteley, who won all three in 1978). The Trustees Watercolour Prize was awarded to Viola Dominello for *The Hawkesbury.* Michael Lindeman was announced 2010 Sulman Prize winner for *Paintings, Prints and Wall Hangings*, as judged by artist Imants Tillers. All 3 finalist exhibitions at the Art Gallery of NSW until 30 May. The Archibald Prize tours NSW regional galleries in 2010/11.

Appointments

John Cheeseman, previously Director of Blacktown Arts Centre, is the new Mosman Art Gallery Cultural Services Manager (includes the role of Gallery Director). Randi Linnegar, Director, King Street Gallery on William, has been appointed President of the Australian Commercial Galleries Association (ACGA). Rachel Arndt joins Museums &Galleries NSW as Manager, Touring Exhibition Services. John Turier has been appointed head of Sculpture at Newcastle TAFE Hunter Institute. Shona Wilson is the recipient of the 2010 Art Omi International Artists Residency, New York USA (awarded through the Art Omi Australia Committee).

Northern Territory

Melbourne magnet

Direct from Darwin, *Territory Time* is a commissioned exhibition by Melbourne's Next Wave Festival. Showing at Headquarters in Northcote, the exhibition runs 13–30 May, with a dusk-to-dawn sound performance by Kris Keogh where the audience is invited to stay overnight. The exhibition includes installation works by emerging artists Rebecca Arbon, Joshua Bonson, Kris Keogh, Catherine McAvoy and Siying Zhou (curator/artist). Darwin artist and new mother Bek Mifsud has also been invited to show work in Melbourne in Gallery 101's drawing-based *Something in the Air* exhibition, curated by Martina Copley. Runs 26 May – 12 June.

Roper returns

Colour Country: art from Roper River finishes its national tour at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. Curated by Wagga Wagga Art Gallery Director Cath Bowdler, the exhibition consists of approximately 50 works from artists including Ginger Riley Munduwalawala, Djambu Barra Barra, Willie Gudabi, Gertie Huddleston and Amy Jirwulurr Johnson. Showing from 22 May – 11 July; opening night (21 May) features a short performance of *Crossing Roper Bar* by the Australian Art Orchestra.

Dark Dreams for the dry

Showing from 7 May – 12 June at 24HR Art - Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art is *Dark Dreams + Fluorescent Flesh* starring Mimi Kelly, Pat Brassington, Jane Burton and Monika Tichacek; *Mrs Darwin's Garden* by CDU Lecturer Carole Wilson; in the Boxset, *Enchanted Commerce* by Blythe Neve; and on the Monitor *Tea Leaf Reading 1* by Dorota Mytych.

Crash and burn

DVAA's Woods Street Gallery is showing Lyn Temby's *Crash Smash and Pash Part 1* which is a prelude to *Crash Smash and Pash Part 2* to be held at the Supreme Court later in October; and in DEAF Space Gallery, *A Year of Endangerment* by Emily Ahearn. Both exhibitions run 7–29 May.

On a roll

'If music is the key that unlocks the door to memories and emotions then lyrics are the vehicle for the imagery' – so goes the inspiration behind Rob Brown's latest exhibition *Rock Art & Sausage Roll* finishing up 1 May at Cross Cultural Art Exchange (CCAE), Darwin. Then new works by Lisa Wolfgramm adorn the walls from 6–29 May. Lisa's abstract paintings are comprised of layers of paint, the surface skilfully manipulated to reveal the preceding layers.

About town

Northern Editions Gallery, at Charles Darwin University, features etchings and silkscreen prints by Eubena Nampitjin from the Warlayirti Artists group, from 3–28 May. Closer to Darwin's CBD, *Gadaman Yolngu – Clever People* is a selection of new fibre works from Elcho Island Arts, showing at Outstation gallery, Parap, to 14 May. At Framed gallery, in nearby Stuart Park, Torres Strait Islander Dennis Nona, and Katherine resident Jan Milner Cole are showing new works from 14 May – 6 June.

Basedow time

A new exhibition, *A Different Time: The Expedition Photographs of Herbert Basedow*, opens 2 May at the Northern Territory Library. Herbert Basedow was an anthropologist, geologist and doctor, whose photographs document his expeditions to Central Australia in the early 1900s. He was also a keen linguist, recording words and songs from Luritja (Western Desert) and Arrernte languages.

Lashings of literary

WordStorm - the Festival of Australasian Writing is on again in Darwin, 12–16 May. This year's festival hosts such luminaries as Professor Germaine Greer, Professor Marcia Langton, Jill Jolliffe, Tim Flannery, Nicolas Rothwell and Marie Munkara, winner of the 2009 David Unaipon Award for her work *Every Secret Thing*, which also won the 2010 NT Book of the Year. AMA's editor will also venture into the 'storm', facilitating a panel on Aboriginal art with Langton, Rothwell and Larrakia artist Gary Lee. www.ntwriters.com.au

Cornering enigmas

Sarah Brown's *Just around the Corner* finishes up 14 May at Peta Appleyard Gallery, Alice Springs. Then *The Enigma of the White Man* by Rod Moss opens 21 May, coinciding with his book launch *The Hard Light of Day: An Artist's Story of Friendships in Arrernte*; exhibition continues to 9 June.

Alice Prize

The 36th Alice Prize opens 1 May at the Araluen Arts Centre, this year including 16 NT artists in the selection. As well as receiving the $20K (acquisitive) prize money, the winner participates in a 4-week residency in Alice Springs. Exhibition continues to 6 June.

Whole lotta love

A Head Full of Love is the theme for this year's Alice Springs Beanie Festival (25–28 June). Competition entries must arrive by 4 June. Download your entry forms www.beaniefest.org

Ministerial tour

Katherine Regional Arts is hosting Colin Holt's touring show *Chief Ministers* to 25 May. These very amusing paintings are the same size and framed in the same manner as the official portraits that hang in Darwin's Government House.

acrylic on Belgian linen. A finalist in the *36*
at Araluen Galleries, Alice
ine www.aliceprize.com

2 Peter Newry, *Untitled* ochre pigments on canvas. *Peter*
ing until 2 May at Mossenson
ssensongalleries.com.au

3 Rob Brown *I Shot a man in Reno*, 2010, acrylic
Showing in *Rock Art & Sausage Roll*, until
1 May, at CCAE, Darwin www.ccae.com.au

4 Siying Zhou, *Who's There?*, 2010, aluminium board
digital print, speakers, wires, digital sound player. *Territory*
Time is a commissioned exhibition by the *Next W*
Festival Melbourne. On show at Headquarters, Melb
from 13 to 30 May, with a sound performanc
Keogh where the audience is invited to stay overnight
www.headquarters.org.au, 2010.nextwave.org.au

Artnotes

Western Australia

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Geek love

Audiences react strongly to Patricia Piccinini's sculptures because they are provoked to consider similarities between human and creature, natural and un-natural, and fascination and aversion. Her skill in exploring figurative form, moulding silicone, and adding human hair creates skin colours and textures on hybrid beings that make them appear almost excruciatingly real. These somewhat familiar figures are not entirely alien as they explore relationships between the human condition, biotechnology, art, sci-fi and the environment. *Patricia Piccinini: RELATIVITY* includes over 20 significant works and a site-specific installation. At the Art Gallery of Western Australia 1 May – 22 Aug. www.artgallery.wa.gov.au

Ceramic assimilations

Earlier this year at Turner Galleries, we were greeted by Susan Flavell's massive and intimidating snarling she-werewolf. Well known for creating human, animal, and hybrid creature-like forms, Flavell, like Piccinini, draws on the fantastical. This exhibition however takes a diversion from her commanding cardboard constructions. Through funding by The Mark Howlett Foundation, Flavell's recent work develops ceramic techniques to create a dialogue between a form and its surface as she continues to interrogate the domestic and mythical storytelling and imagery. The WA-based Mark Howlett Foundation has generated close to $1 million in artist commissions since 1991. At Gallery Central 8–29 May.

Sleepless on the western front

Perhaps Stuart Elliott doesn't sleep much; the surreal stuff of post-apocalyptic, industrial-sited nightmares seems to permeate his prolific output of paintings and sculptures. Last year he coordinated the darkly themed and time-warped *Underpass Motel* exhibition and DVD, a project that raised speculation about a future or parallel state of being at the edge of the universe. Now visitors to Holmes à Court Gallery have the opportunity to meet Elliott during his artist residency in the gallery, as he constructs a series of small, table-based sculptures. Until 13 June. www.holmesacourtgallery.com.au

Rain shadow

Inspired by living in the wheat-belt town of Pantapin, and being one of only two residents in town, it is this secluded, beautiful, and yet often harsh WA region that provides a source of inspiration for Paul Lacey's painting. Hard-edged figures with wind-swept hair peer at us from arid, salt-crusted expanses. At Greenhill Galleries 5–20 May. Later in the month, also at Greenhills, Adriane Strampp exhibits soft-edged silhouette-like paintings. Her works of horses, rabbits and elk are perhaps first heard before they are seen, only just visible in the depths of swirling fog or smoky haze. On closer inspection some are translucent, almost absent. From 21 May – 5 June. www.greenhillgalleries.com

High beam

James Corbett recycles car parts into sculpture. Maintaining the integrity of the original pieces, he creates an eclectic assortment of detailed animal sculptures (those frequently subjected to highway hit-and-run incidents) and shiny small-scale, speedy-looking motorcycles, cars, and other forms of speeding machines with drivers. Imagine the wooly coat of a sheep made of spark plugs and speeding streamlined cyclists in flashing silver. *Hares, Hounds and other Fast Machines* at Linton & Kay (L&K) Contemporary Art Galleries, 2 April – 6 May.

A brush with the past

For many Australians, Europe is a site for pilgrimage. Last year Rachel Coad exhibited 7 large-scale oil paintings of Australians living in London. She also included a written statement of each sitter's personal experiences and thoughts of living over there. In contrast to these contemporary faces and personalities, Coad is now collecting old photographs from antique shops and op shops and translating anonymous individuals into tenderly painted portraits. *Legacy* at Perth Galleries, 7–30 May.

Highrise malaise

Through his large, format inkjet images, Qin Wen takes us on a journey through the Chinese megalopolis of Chongqing. a familiar story of all too many vibrant, historically rich, inner city communities at the mercy of corrupt city councilors and greedy developers. Qin Wen memorialises the snuffed-out heartbeat of an architecturally diverse labyrinth of life. Ji Zhou too comments (through digital C-prints) on his sense of aimlessness as the ancient living fabric of Beijing's neighbourhoods are leveled. Curated by Zhang Guotian, *Another Story: Chinese Contemporary Photography* at Fremantle Arts Centre (FAC). Upstairs at FAC is the delightful exhibition *In the Shadow of Photography* by Slovakian artist Magda Stanová. Her visual essay inquires why some people get stage fright when they are photographed and why photographs are rectangular when the camera lens is circular. All exhibitions until 16 May. www.fac.org.au

Hidden dragon

With an avid interest in modernity, and the impacts of globalisation on visual cultural expression and pathways for constructing knowledge, Christopher Crouch reflects on landscape and nationhood, and his ongoing engagement with China. *This much I know: new paintings by Christopher Crouch* at Gallery East, 7–30 May.

Highly Improbable winner

With her oil painting *Call of the Highly Improbable*, Bendigo artist Kate Bergin won the major $25K prize at the 2010 City of Albany Art Prize. The judges, Dr Stefano Carboni, Director, Art Gallery of WA, Margaret Moore, Visual Arts manager, Perth International Arts Festival, and Jason Smith, Director, Heide Museum of Modern Art, describe her works as commanding. The other part of her prize is 4 weeks studio time in Albany, with $2.5K for expenses. Annika Koops of Melbourne, and Stephanie Tabram of Hobart, were awarded Highly Commended Prizes of $1K each. The money for this national prize for paintings is provided by an Albany-based bequest, The Jack Family Charitable Trust.

First-class glass

The Tom Malone Prize is an acquisitive prize for contemporary Australian glass artists with the winning work entering the WA State Art Collection. This year the judges Elizabeth Malone and Stefano Carboni visited the shortlisted artists' glass studios around Australia before selecting the winning entry. Of the 8 short-listed artists: Peter Bowles, Lisa Cahill, Brian Corr, Tegan Empson, Deirdre Feeney, Penny Fuller, Holly Grace, Sheena Larsen, Nick Mount, Benjamin Sewell and Belinda Toll, Deidre Feeney is the winner. Her work, *That evening*, is a waterjet-cut, kiln-worked, cold-worked, lamp-worked glass building with a projected video animation.

Horace Trenerry shines

Carrick Hill continues its successful run of exhibitions focusing on SA artists, this time presenting Horace Trenerry (1899-1958). Known for his uniquely beautiful, high-keyed and chalky palettes, Trenerry pursued an individual vision, despite poverty and ill health. Largely ignored by the art historians of his time, his works were included in the Tate gallery's exhibition of Australian painting in 1962-63, and he is now considered one of the finest modern Australian landscape painters of the 20th century. Curated by Lou Klepac, this exhibition includes many important works from both private and state collections, some never before seen on public display. Until 27 June.

Creative space

Renew Adelaide is a non-profit, artist-run initiative which follows the vision of Renew Newcastle: that artist-run spaces have the power to transform cities. The project's goal is to fill vacant and underused retail and office space in the city with artist and community-led initiatives focused around the visual and performing arts, and to help the development of a night economy in the city centre. Along with FELTspace, Seedling Art Space, the Format gallery space (15 Peel Street) and the 2% collective, Adelaide is embracing a grassroots arts based movement determined to make the most of our city's creativity. Renew Adelaide has attracted strong interest and support, particularly through an organised forum and workshops in March with Marcus Westbury and Marni Jackson. It is planning a pilot project of between 3 and 6 projects to run alongside Art West for 2 weeks in the city's west end, from 27 May to 10 June. For updates and expressions of interest, see, http://renewadelaide.wordpress.com

Eco arts initiative

Seedling Art Space is reviving a former experimental orchard office building in the Adelaide foothills to create a community-based space for contemporary art, set within the beautiful Blackwood Forest Recreation Park. In April, local artist Anna Hughes exhibited along with live musical performances as part of *String Lines,* a sound walk curated by Kahl Hopper in which 7 musicians performed at different sites, the public wandering trails to find each performer. In May, Carolina Facelli's *Apples & Pears* references the gallery's very small but historic architectural space, conjuring experimental orchards and the consumption of boundless fruits. At the 2 May opening will be *Threshold* performance works by Eleanor Lindberg and Shelley Krycer. www.seedlingartspace.asn.au

Studios in the Hills

Julie Corfe, Lynn Elzinga-Henry, Rita Hall, Veronica Oborn Jefferis, Helen Taylor and Sheila Whittam have come together to create a supportive microcosm of artists in the Adelaide Hills, where they have all lived, worked and created for over 20 years. The atelier open studios are an independent initiative of the group, providing the general public with the opportunity to watch professional artists at work, purchase artwork directly from the artist and discuss their unique arts practices and styles. 22 and 23 May 2010, 10am to 4pm. Studio locations via: www.ritahallsstudio.com.au

New Chair for Country Arts

Mr Lew Owens has recently been appointed Chair of Country Arts SA for a period of 3 years, commencing February 2010. Mr Owens, a former Chief Executive Officer of ETSA Utilities, takes over from respected Adelaide architect Steve Grieve. Country Arts SA has a broad responsibility for development of the arts across regional SA.

$ for emerging artists

SA's premier exhibition for recently graduating artists, The Helpmann Academy Graduate Exhibition, has been running annually for over 15 years. This year's event generated a record $30K-plus for participating artists. 6 outstanding artists also received awards valued at over $12K: Brooke Randall (the Hill Smith Gallery Helpmann Academy Friends Award), Klaus Gutowski (the Raffen Prize), Astra Parker (City of Adelaide Award-exhibition), Scott James (City of Adelaide Award-acquisitive), Michelle Jones (Adelaide Art Society Award), and Elizabeth Hetzel (Backer's Prize).

Berlin residency return

Adelaide artist Amy Joy Watson has completed a 2-month residency at Takt Kunstprojektraum, in Berlin, Germany. An artist-run space established in 2003, Takt accepts international artists visiting the German capital into their artist residency program, providing an environment that fosters creative energies. Amy's recent work involves the stitching together of balsa wood panels to create geometric forms. She intends presenting her Berlin work at the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, in late 2010.

Ian Abdulla in Canada

SA artist Ian Abdulla has been invited to exhibit at Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, one of Canada's premier public art galleries.

Abdulla is one of 3 international artists invited to show together, whose childhoods and adolescence were profoundly shaped by larger cultural changes taking place in their countries. Now 61, Ian began painting in 1989 at the age of 41. He was named 'South Australian Aboriginal Artist of the Year' in 1991, and his work features in major public collections around Australia. Ian will travel to Canada, courtesy of Mendel Art Gallery, to attend the exhibition opening and participate workshops, artist talks and activities, with members of the public and local Indigenous artists and communities. 16 April to 15 June.

Artnotes

Victoria

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Collective conscience

In an era where branding reigns supreme, it is not only business language that thrives under visual totalitarianism; artists too are encouraged to find a niche identity with a recognisable look, style or message. Martin Kippenberger was unique, in that he continually resisted stylisation and mannerism, with the exception of his penchant for both literally and metaphorically shape-shifting. Perhaps somewhat less inspired by the self-deprecation and excesses of Kippenberger and more by his interest in social systems and preference for mixing styles, comes this new exhibition at VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, *Lamp Chair Table Big Painting*. Artists Veronica Kent, Doug Heslop, Lou Hubbard, Christopher LG Hill, Elizabeth Newman and Nicki Wynnychuk explore the conceptual and linguistic possibilities of collective activities. The artists have all demonstrated inspiration grounded in the deconstruction and use of language, including the manipulation of everyday materials, psychoanalysis and social systems. Until 29 May. **EJ**

3 venues, 12 artists, 16 works

Showing concurrently until 30 May at Shepparton Art Gallery, Benalla Art Gallery and Wangaratta Exhibitions Gallery is *Art#1*, a series of projects commissioned by ACCA. Curated by Hannah Mathews, the program has been devised to suit the collections, audience, architecture and ambitions of each of the 3 galleries. Video works from Shaun Gladwell, Anastasia Klose, Laresa Kosloff, David Rosetzky, Darren Sylvester and Daniel von Sturmer are on display at Wangaratta, whilst at Shepparton the work of Nick Devlin and Justine Khamara can be seen alongside 2 new site-specific installations specially commissioned for the gallery by Nathan Gray and Pat Foster & Jen Berean; and at Benalla, Brendan Lee presents his major installation *Proving Ground*. **GC**

Territorial Pissings

After a brief hiatus and a search for a new home, Utopian Slumps has re-opened as a commercial venture in the heart of Melbourne's CBD. Formerly a non-profit curator-run arts initiative, the gallery now represents a small stable of predominantly Melbourne-based artists The Victorian heritage building at 33 Guilford Lane has been fitted out by local artists and designers with a 'conceptual desk' developed by artist/architecture group S.I.B.L.I.N.G. Director Melissa Loughnan will continue to present non-commercial projects through *USSR* (Utopian Slumps Second Round), a non-profit annexe to the gallery to be launched later in the year. The inaugural exhibition *Territorial Pissings* brings together 15 Australian artists to explore the notion of mark-making and ownership in contemporary art. Until 8 May. **RS**

No Risk Too Great

'How can we act boldly and imaginatively, in art and in life?', asks Next Wave in its 2010 Program. Artistic Director Jeff Kahn describes

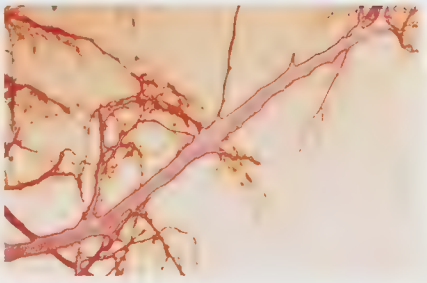
the festival's overarching theme as, 'exploring the role of risk in a risk-averse culture. Just what does 'risk' actually mean in these volatile times?' The risk-taking program showcases work by solo artists, collectives and an unprecedented number of special commissions and curated keynote projects. *Structural Integrity* at North Melbourne's Meat Market building will explore new work from ARIs around Australia alongside those from 5 Asian countries. *The Sports Club Project*, 2 multi-art events, will be held at the George Knott athletic Field and the MCG. The 2010 festival will also include a dance program for the first time, an all-night video marathon at Federation Square, and new performance works at Shed 4 in Docklands, at ACMI, under Fed Square and at the Arts Centre. From 13–30 May. RS

Victoria's boom

Benalla Art Gallery has been granted $436K under the Victorian Government through Regional and Rural Development to upgrade the modernist gallery building, improving the environmental controls and installing energy and water saving initiatives and solar power ... Horsham Art Gallery closes at the end of June for renovations which will expand their exhibition spaces and create a new education space. The redevelopment is part of a larger building project which includes a new performing arts centre. The gallery will present a series of single exhibitions in a newly created exhibition space which launches in early July. These are the first of many gallery building projects which are currently in planning throughout the state. The Regional Infrastructure Development Fund has committed $22 million towards 11 major arts and cultural projects in regional Victoria worth $45.5 million. **GC**

News from the sector

The Australian Commercial Galleries Association will close the ACGA Gallery at Federation Square after less than 12 months ... Melbourne International Fine Art (MiFA) has recently launched a new gallery in Collins Street with a focus on internationally acclaimed artists from the Asia Pacific region ... Exhibitions preparator Scott Miles and Events Coordinator Bianca Charleston have left the Ian Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne, to take on positions at ACCA and VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery respectively ... Jane Rhodes also recently commenced at ACCA as Exhibitions Coordinator,



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moving from her position at the State Library of Victoria ... Lisa Keen leaves her position of Gallery Manager/Curator at Dianne Tanzer Gallery after 3 years. Gillian Brown has been appointed as the gallery's new Program Coordinator. **GC**

ACT & Region

HELEN MAXWELL

Weereewa wrap-up

The biennial *Weereewa: a Festival of Lake George* was enormously successful with an array of compelling events including concerts, exhibitions and competitions, dinners, artists' and writers' talks, and environmental forums. A highlight for me was the Lake walk on the gorgeous morning of Sunday 28 March, led by local naturalist Rainer Rehwinkel. At least 100 people threaded our way across the Lake-bed from the end of Lake Road, below the escarpment. Sculptures in the Sculpture Prize dotted the landscape and screenprinted teatowels, *Windwash,* made by artists associated with this Megalo Print Studio initiated project, flapped in the gentle, warm autumn breeze along 200m of line. The joint winners of the Sculpture Prize (judged by Wendy Teakel, Head of the Sculpture Workshop, School of Art, Australian National University (ANU), were Dave Argaet, with *Sands of Time,* and Andy Townsend and Susie Bleach, with *Adrift*. 3rd prize went to Tracy Luff, for *Carbon Lockup.* Philippa Kelly (former AMA editor), who has been the festival's primary and passionate driver in the last few years, will retire from her role as chairperson.

Gulaga

As winter descends on the coastal region, an exhibition at Bega Regional Gallery (to May 29), *Gulaga,* including NSW South Coast artists Karen Charlebois, Cheryl Davison, Annie Franklin, Bernard O'Grady, Veronica O'Leary, Jan Ridgway, and Gordon Robinson, focuses on the power of Gulaga mountain, an ancient volcano. As well as being an exquisitely beautiful part of the coast, Gulaga is an important Aboriginal cultural and lore site. Indigenous artist Cheryl Davison recalls her childhood, living on Wallaga Lake, near Gulaga Mountain, and her grandfather Reggie Walker's stories about the mountain.

Michael Callaghan survey

As the 2009 H. C. Coombs Creative Arts Fellow in the Research School of Humanities and the Arts, ANU, Michael Callaghan has been spending a substantial amount of time in Canberra over the past 6 months. Hosted by the Painting Workshop at the School of Art, Michael is researching through visual imagery the effects on people of the war in Iraq and the war on terror. An exhibition, *Michael Callaghan: a survey 1967–2010*, at the School of Art (SofA) Gallery 6–29 May, will include early text/image works as well as some of his most powerful posters from Redback Graphix days and recent works produced during his Fellowship.

Foyer Gallery fare

Two PhD works-in-progress exhibitions at the ANU SofA Foyer Gallery in May are *Endlessly Circle* in which Meredith Hughes considers the idea of endlessness through textiles and found objects, and *Out of Sight* Matthew Smith using plywood, explores the uncanny in the built environment. Matthew can be quizzed about his work at a seminar on 13 May. Exhibitions

run to 8 May, and 11–15 May respectively. Also showing at the Foyer Gallery, Chris Fortescue's photographic images and objects to do with 'folding', produced during an autumnal residency in the School of Art's Sculpture Workshop (18–29 May), and Jodie Cunningham, *Succulent,* paintings and works on paper in which the formal elements of design, colour and pattern create the illusion of collage, referencing modernist hard-edge abstraction, allude obliquely to personal experience, memory and domestic interiors (from 31 May).

Sue Lovegrove lectures

Ex-Canberra-based artist Sue Lovegrove (now living near Huonville in Tasmania) will deliver 3 guest lectures, collectively titled *Visual Interpretations of Antacrtica* (11–12 May) as part of a program at the Institute of Antarctic and Southern Ocean Studies, University of Tasmania. Lovegrove will discuss the heroic and unheroic in Antarctic art, focusing on the work of contemporary Australian and NZ (and 1 American) artists and how they reference historical artists. Lovegrove's relationship with the Antarctic began in 2003 when she was awarded an Australian Antarctic Division Arts Fellowship which took her on a resupply voyage to the Antarctic on the Aurora Australis. Later this year Lovegrove will show new work at Beaver Galleries, Canberra. Let's hope we will also have the opportunity in Canberra to hear her Antarctic lectures.

Town 'n' country

Until 30 May, Chapman Gallery, Manuka is hosting an exhibition of paintings and soft sculptures, *Desert Links,* bringing together artists working through Tjarlirli Arts Centre, WA (their vibrant paintings representing Tjukurla in the Ngaanyatjarra lands) and Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre, Larapinta Town Camp, Alice Springs. The exhibition juxtaposes works made out in country with those made in a more urban context.

PhotoAccess update

PhotoAccess hosts a Photopolymer Plate/Solar Etching workshop (8–9 May). Barak Zelig will instruct on the non-toxic process of exposing plates in the sun and transferring images to printing paper. On 7 May is Digital Camera for Beginners, where participants will enjoy a gentle stroll in the park wielding their apparatuses, and afterwards explore camera settings. The PhotoAccess members show, *Access all Areas.* will occupy the Huw Davies Gallery to 16 May,

while the multi-media room shows Katie Ryan's *Mi Amistad,* a moving animation about relationships. From 20 May – 6 June Margaret Kalms's show, *Period Piece*, is about menstruation, and a group exhibition, *Thredbo,* is the result of a late March PhotoAccess field trip to the Snowies where participants worked with studio lights in daylight and camera flash in the landscape.

Berlin sights

Ed Whalan, General Manager of PhotoAccess, is preparing for a 3-month residency at the Takt Kunstprojectrum in Berlin. With support from CAPO and PhotoAccess, Ed plans to continue his work on time-based panorama and also to develop a body of work as social documentary looking at the radical, subversive gay scene in Berlin.

Artnotes

Tasmania

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Days of our lives

April was a tumultuous month for Tasmanian politics as a state election delivered a hung Parliament. After weeks of drama, Governor Peter Underwood instructed Labour leader and former Premier David Bartlett to form government with the Greens (led by Nick McKim), despite the fact that the Liberal party had received the majority of votes. *The Mercury* newspaper was emblazoned with headlines like 'deal or no deal' and 'Libs anger: shock' and went on to cite education and health as the 2 immediate policy areas to be shaken up in the wake of the upheaval.

But what of the Arts? Last year the incumbent Labor government delivered a lacklustre arts policy that remains in effect until directives from the new government. The Greens also released a remarkably innocuous arts policy pre-election. The short answer is that the status quo will be maintained, and it's likely that Labor Minister Michele O'Byrne will retain the arts portfolio. Widespread support from individual artists and industry stakeholders needs to be galvanised in order to form a strong lobby group able to put forward a valid case to government for arts funding.

GASP

The City Council of Glenorchy has established a reputation for cultural excellence, and yet again is currently demonstrating leadership with the advent of an ambitious project predicated upon arts and community. Glenorchy Art & Sculpture Park Linkages project (GASP) aims to redevelop a significant portion of the northern suburbs foreshore. Glenorchy Council committed $5 million to the project, which will link philanthropist David Walch's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA: due to open in January 2011) with the greater Hobart area and is expected to facilitate an increase in cultural tourism. The appointment of Dr Pippa Dickson as the Project Development Officer for GASP ensures the success of the project, as she brings a wealth of expertise in design and project management.

Here come the brides

Effervescent Tasmanian-based artist Elizabeth Woods is creating a wedding inspired event where you can marry an apple tree! As part of the City Council of Glenorchy's biennial *The Works* festival, Woods is working from St Mathews Church Open Studio in Moonah during April and May. Woods has an international reputation for witty, engaging and generous ephemeral art works that draw inspiration from nature and are highly engaging. The *there is going to be a wedding and you are all invited* project has generated a tremendous public response, with over 100 rosy-cheeked northern suburbs residents committed to attend a mass wedding ceremony on the Elwick Bay Foreshore in full bridal regalia. The wedding ceremony is planned for Sunday 16 May complete with wedding cake, celebrant, bunting, food, wine, music and photographer; just pray for a fine day! www.gcc.tas.gov.au

Not all beer and skittles

Hobart is celebrating the emergence of a new artist-run Initiative. The Stable Gallery at Moonah is home to the artists' collective known as Skittle Alley, a group of local practitioners who work across all media and share a desire to explore contemporary cultural themes. Spokesperson Mat Ward is enthusiastic about the venture, expressing appreciation to well-known watering hole Cooley's Hotel, who have generously supported Skittle Alley with the redevelopment of their stable into a working gallery space. During April and May, the gallery is exhibiting a series of large-scale acrylic and aerosol works by Aedan Howlett called *Hungry Human*. Having recently moved from WA to Hobart, Howlett's work is inspired by capitalism and its satiation of desire.

Literally fascinating

2 disparate cultural institutions inhabit the Carnegie Building in Hobart; a contemporary art gallery and the Maritime Museum. During May these institutions are showing analogous exhibitions based around the early 19th century French explorers, scientists and artists on the Baudin expedition to Australia 1800-1804. In the Carnegie Gallery exhibition *Littoral*, curated by Vivonne Thwaites, brings together 6 contemporary artists (Judy Watson, Toni Warburton, Julie Gough, Aadje Bruce, Chris de Rosa, and Beverley Southcott) to reflect on encounters between nature and culture, inspired by the marine works of Charles Alexandre Lesueur, artist on the Baudin voyage. Concurrently, the Maritime Museum displays historical documents, artworks and specimens that motivated these 6 artists. The *Littoral* exhibition continues to Burnie Regional Gallery in October. www.hobartcity.com.

Spinning dreams

The exhibition *Dream Weavers* is casting a spell at CAST gallery in Hobart during May and June. Inspired by the work of contemporary artists who revisit aesthetics and ideals associated with the 1970s, curators Daine Singer and Kate Just proffer a magical and compelling experience. Artists Jacque Drinkall, Belle Bassin, Dylan Martorell, Nathan Gray, Kate Just, James Morrison, Alasdair McLuckie and Sean Bailey employ knitting, embroidery, fur, sequins, beading, macrame, glass, collage and assemblage, with a focus upon DIY and craft. In an attempt to establish connectivity, authenticity and spirituality in their own lives, the artists use a bricolage of counterculture, new-ageism and the supernatural, signalling a desire to return to a group of attitudes that embody genuine hope and belief in change.

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and Milani Gallery, Brisbane. In *Littoral*, 6 artist
Bruce, Chris De Rosa, Julie Gough, Beverley S
arburton and Judy Watson) reflect on encounters
between nature and culture. Showing at Carnegie
Gallery, Hobart, until 16 May www.hobartcity.com.au

Bang, bang you're a star!

Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania (CAST) has announced the formation of a new annual exhibition called *Shotgun* to showcase the best new creative talent in the state through the work of 3 artists who are selected by an expert panel of peers. CAST Program Coordinator Kylie Johnson announced in April that the 3 inaugural *Shotgun 2010* artists are Sarah Maher, Cath Robinson and Scott Cotterell. www.castgallery.org

Flourishing future

Professor Marie Sierra has been appointed Head of the School of Visual and Performing Arts in Launceston. Replacing longstanding and respected academic Professor Vince McGrath, Sierra brings an impressive lineage of experience as an artist, educator, writer, academic and presenter. Sierra's fresh ideas, enthusiasm and energy have already sparked a positive response with staff, students and the wider public, inspiring confidence that Launceston arts education will continue to blossom. www.acadarts.utas.edu.au

Letters to the Editor

Re-thinking Literacy

If there is something distinctly Aboriginal in NOT learning to write, in NOT working, in NOT attending school and in refusing to become 'like whitefellas' as Jennifer Biddle writes ('Art under Intervention: the radical ordinary of June Walkutjukurr Richards', AMA #227, March 2010, pp. 35-37), then these Australian Aboriginals are truly destined for 'wretched extinction' as Captain James Cook originally predicted.

Ian Bernadt. March 2010

Bernadt for the opportunity to clarify my argument. The point I was making is better made by June's works themselves. Through her writing-based art, a strong sense that Western Desert people are in fact literate emerges; a portrait which runs counter to the current emphasis of the NT Closing the Gap policy. The point is not that Western Desert people are destined for 'extinction' because they cannot read or write – they clearly *are* reading and writing – only perhaps not in terms that meet with Whitefella expectations and standards (such as NAPLAN). The failure here, it seems to me, is not a failure by Aborigines but of national policy makers who cannot see in anything other than their own terms. June and any number of other Indigenous artists' works are vital because they provide a glimpse of complex and rich life-worlds that may possess writing and standards of literacy defined *in their own terms*. What is urgently needed is not more assimilationist policy such as the NT Intervention but rather, a greater national 'imagination' as Pat Dodson has eloquently identified it, in which being Indigenous, speaking a vernacular language, and living in remote Australia 'becomes an advantage not an impediment to your opportunities' (www.unsw.edu.au/news/pad/articles/2009/feb/pat_dodson.html)

Jennifer Biddle, April 2010

Unsettling labels

Being Canadian myself I had plenty to tak the Canadian author [David Garneau] to task for! (See Garneau's article 'Apropos Appropriate Appropriations: After the Apologies', AMA #226, Dec. 2010, pp. 27-29.) 'Settlers' indeed. That is just silly to apply this term to all non-indigenous people in Canada. Why does this levelled categorising take such precedence in reporting the past in the present? I think labels serve only to subjugate and prejudice an audience who might otherwise be supportive. And, labels do not speak well of the authors who show they can be as culturally biased as the people they are trying to denote.

Flossie Peitsch, January 2010

raised in my article the term 'Settler' so unsettled the writer. 'Settler' is descriptive, not pejorative. The term was meant to replace less polite words like 'coloniser.' It is increasingly being used by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal folks to include all immigrant populations that settled on Indigenous lands both during and after the conventional colonial period. Just as the word 'Aboriginal' bundles big categories like First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and smaller categories such as Cree, Nakota and Salish; 'Settler' is a blanket designation used for convenience to cover non-Aboriginal people with a positive appellation (rather than a negative, 'non'). Just as Indigenous people prefer to be named by their Nation, and are not thrilled by terms like 'Aboriginal' that deny specificity and lump together very distinct peoples, I imagine the author does not identify with the less savoury members of her 'Settler' category. While it would be nice to escape 'labels', nasty histories and bad company, we are stuck with naming, knowing and neighbours. Perhaps the writer could come up with a better name for Settlers.

David Garneau, April 2010

First person

McDonald's recent article on my Aboriginal arts business, I would like to make a number of points.

In regards to the Telstra Awards, it needs to be noted that the negative impact of the Hetti Perkins supported, and John Oster and Edwina Circuitt lead art centre boycott of the 2008 Awards by many art centres, has been devastating to the Irrunytju Art Centre business. The boycott occurred in protest against concern for my ethics, allegations for which there has been no evidence, using the participation of my artists from Irrunytju in the Awards as the vehicle to attack me. Where are the ethics here in regards to the actions of Perkins, Oster and Circuitt, when you look at what they have done to the lives and careers of the many artists, their families and their extremely remote desert community at Irrunytju? And in this case, like many others, why have the artists not been consulted, both those who supposedly boycotted and those whose lives were negatively impacted by this action? (I have been informed that most artists who boycotted the Awards, had no knowledge of the politics or even what was going on).

In regards to John McDonald's discussion of the new Aboriginal Art Centre at Alice Springs, jointly owned by Tommy Watson and myself, it should be noted that over the past four years that I have managed the artist's affairs, he and his family have never lived so well. The artist and his family have enjoyed an unprecedented lifestyle for a remote-area Aboriginal artist. At the end of the day I fight for the improvement of 'Aboriginal lifestyle' as we know it. Like Kevin Rudd who supports the development of Indigenous and non-Indigenous business partnerships, I believe my actions to promote Indigenous interests through such partnerships in Aboriginal art is an entrepreneurial model that should be emulated widely. Government control of Aboriginal art centres has proved to be widely unsustainable and very costly. Given the desperate situation in which so many of these centres operate, I don't believe it is in the long-term interests of indigenous empowerment that they should continue in this way.

With respect to the two common assault charges (of pushing) made against me. It is on the court record in my former wife's testimony that I never raised a hand to her during the 12 years we were married or any other time. I agreed to an assault charge in the first case because I was advised by my legal team that to plead guilty to this would be the quickest way to minimise damage to my family and children rather than pursuing justice through a very long and costly fight in the county court. (This was in 2003 at a time when the government was undertaking a very public campaign against domestic violence).

The second assault charge refers to 2007 when I was imprisoned for 9 weeks for a breach of a suspended sentence (of up to 2 years, from 2002-2005, at the judge's discretion). Even the prosecution took my side, telling the judge it was not a jailable offence but constituted a situation of exceptional circumstance. In my appeal the 3 Supreme Court judges found 5 points as to why I should not have been imprisoned and detailed what in this situation contributed to exceptional circumstance. They decided in my favour that I should not have been imprisoned and from that day the law as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances in regards to cases such as mine, was changed. The judges were outraged that I was put in this situation. By changing the law they made sure my situation would not happen again. I have never seen any mention in the press that my case precipitated a new law.

Kind regards,
John Ioannou Director, Agathon Galleries, Sydney

Art Almanac

ne April 2010 edition of *Art Monthly* there were two obituaries: one of Ian Gentle whose sculpture I admired and whose company I enjoyed, and the other a warm and appreciative account of the life of Jan McCulloch, the Sydney editor of *Art Almanac* from July 1985 until her death in 2009. Regrettably, I didn't know her.

I did, however, know the original editors of this 'essential guide' – Kiffy Carter (Rubbo), Director of the Ewing Gallery at Melbourne University, and her assistant Meredith Rogers. In the first edition for March-June 1974, they wrote: 'We felt there was a need to compile a comprehensive listing of galleries, exhibitions, lectures, seminars and art events related to the visual arts in and around Melbourne.' The first edition, totalling 11 pages, appears to have been typed then roneoed, and listed 50 galleries and 4 pages of various events.

Art Almanac, as a title, is of course, a misnomer. An almanac is actually an annual calendar of months and days, usually with astronomical data. The original editors, realising their mistake, added a 'PS' to the second edition – 'We discovered (too late!) that an almanac is a yearly publication, so our *Almanac* comes in three sections, i.e., 3 thirds make one whole!' They also stated that: 'The first issue of *Art Almanac* seems to have filled a real need. In fact we greatly underestimated the demand for such a publication and we are, therefore, printing more copies of this second issue.'

From early 1976 *Art Almanac* appeared as a supplement to *Arts Melbourne*, a magazine that proved to have a relatively short life. By early 1979 there had been a small increase in the number

of gallery listings – up from 50 to 59. Then in May 1982 subscribers to this magazine received a letter from Judy Annear, who by then was Director of the George Paton Gallery at Melbourne University, stating, 'This letter is to confirm that the production of the *Art Almanac* is now transferred from the George Paton Gallery to Mr Paul Nolan, who will produce it for sale as of June 1982.'

The first edition under the new management was a small A5-sized magazine, commercially printed with a black and white illustration on the cover of Peter Corlett beside one of his sculptures then being exhibited at the Gryphon Gallery. Priced at $1, this monthly version of *Art Almanac* listed 69 galleries, all within Victoria.

In 1985, however, the publication moved to Sydney and began to include Sydney galleries and then later expanded again to include galleries nationally. Under the editorship of the late Jan McCulloch, the 8-page, black-and-white edition of 1982 grew to the full-colour edition of April 2010 with 186 pages – and an astonishing increase in the number of galleries listed: Melbourne 207, Sydney 153, and an extraordinary total of over 560 galleries Australia wide!

Surely this phenomenon could be the topic for a doctoral thesis? Something along the lines of 'The social significance of the growth of commercial galleries in Australia, as recorded in the editions of *Art Almanac*, 1974 – 2010'.

Ken Scarlett, April 2010

Opportunity knocks

Sketch crawl

The Alice Springs Sketch Crawl is on again! Meet at the Connelan Aviation Museum on Memorial Drive on Saturday 15 May, (11am–6pm). Check out the results from the last Sketch Crawl and register for the next event here: www.sketchcrawl.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=49&t=4919 **HW**

Foyer talent

Alice Springs Town Council is looking for artists to showcase local artwork to the public in their foyer. Local arts organisations and individual artists are invited to submit suitable work for a 2-month period. Contact the Community Projects Officer, t: 08 8950 0505, e: fstoops@astc.nt.gov.au **HW**

BARI nice

Jugglers artspace is gearing up for both the Marie Ellis OAM Prize for Drawing, and the Brisbane Artists' Run Initiative (BARI) festival, and entries are now open for both: www.jugglers.org.au and barifest@gmail.com **DZ**

Art & About

Art & About, the City of Sydney's Public Arts Festival held in Spring, is calling for submissions. Curatorial teams are invited to submit proposals to re-invent and enliven the City laneways. Photographers are invited to submit to Sydney Life Photography Exhibition & Prize (value $10K), and organisations and individuals are invited to submit proposals for events and exhibitions for inclusion within the Art & About 2010 program. ww.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/artandabout **LH**

Festival call-out

Artists of every kind, including painters and sculptors, musicians and singers, performance and multi-media artists, and arts organisations are being called to join in the Manly Arts Festival, which runs 3 to 19 September. Potential participants can nominate and run their own events 'to better promote and celebrate creativity across Manly and Sydney's Northern Beaches,' said Festival Chair and Manly Mayor Jean Hay. Deadline for applications is Friday 14 May 2010. www.manlyartsfestival.com

Countryscapes Award

The $35K Country Energy Art Prize for Landscape Painting, (The Countryscapes Award), is one of Australia's richest annual landscape art prizes. Each year a regional NSW gallery hosts the Award Exhibition with Port Macquarie's Glasshouse (Arts, Conference and Entertainment Centre), home to the 2010 competition, 30 Sept. to 28 Nov. Entries close Friday 25 June, and are exclusive to artists whose principal place of residence is within Country Energy's network distribution area, which covers 95% of NSW. www.countryenergy.com.au/artprize **LH**

Call for entries

Formerly the Fremantle Print Award, the Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award supported by Little Creatures Brewing is calling forth any print or artist's book made in the past two years as eligible to enter the Award. Closing date is 14 June. Information about entry forms available at www.fac.org.au **NS**

AAANZ Student Bursary Scheme

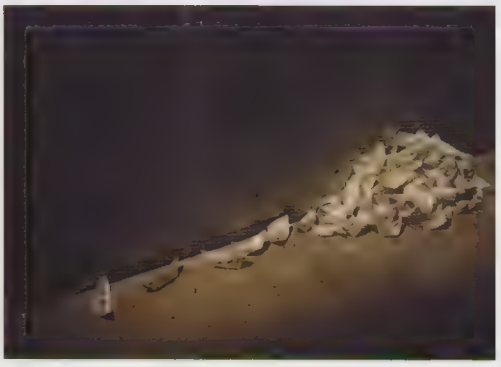
The Art Association of Australia and New Zealand Student Bursary Scheme was developed in 2007 to assist students to travel to CIHA in Melbourne, and is now an ongoing fund to assist students to travel to the annual conferences of the AAANZ. Funds will be allocated strictly for student support (airfares, accommodation); conference conveners will be requested to reduce or waive fees for bursary holders. Please send your contribution by cheque or credit card marked on the form, back of the cheque, letterhead or envelope: 'Bursary Scheme'. Professor Peter McNeil, President, AAANZ, peter.mcneil@uts.edu.au The next annual conference is 1-3 December 2010, hosted by the University of SA, Adelaide.

Public art commission

The Kelvin Grove Road billboard (Creative Industries Precinct, Kelvin Grove), is the largest in Australia dedicated to public art. Measuring 45x9m, the Billboard has featured a curated program of art and design works by a range of art practictioners since its inception six years ago. In 2010, QUT will mark Science Week with a commissioned art/design work on the billboard relating to an aspect of science. Expresssions of interest are being sought from artists, designers and scientists who are interested in developing a work for the site. Submissions close 14 May.

Online craft journal

Craft + Design Enquiry is a new, open access, peer reviewed, online journal surrounding craft and design practice. Dr Kevin Murray is the guest editor of the 3rd edition *The Carbon Issue - Sustainability in Craft and Design*. Call for papers can be found online at www.craftaustralia.org.au/cde in the e-journal's Announcements section, and closes 30 June. It will be published in 2011. www.craftaustralia.org.au/cde



Aboriginal art prize

The Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize is awarded annually to an Aboriginal artist belonging to a NSW language group or born in NSW. The $20K prize is acquisitive. Entry forms are available and are due 26 June. The winners will be announced at the opening on 20 October. www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au. e: artscentre@campbelltown.nsw.gov.au

SALA festival

SALA festival registrations close 24 May, artists, curators and groups can register online: www.salafestival.com. Nominations for the SALA Moving Image Opportunity for Adelaide Film Festival Selection close 18 June. More information: www.salafestival.com

Nature and art

Entries for the 2010 Waterhouse Natural History Art prize close 14 May. This annual competition and exhibition is the richest natural history art prize in Australia, with over $114K in prize money. For details go to: www.thewaterhouse.com.au ... Entries for the Anzang Nature Photography Competition close 14 May. www.anzangnature.com

Parramatta Arts Fellowship 2010

Parramatta Arts Fellowship offers one grant of $20K to a Parramatta-based artist to produce a large visual arts project or significant body of research. Examples of activities that may be funded include developing new work and researching and developing new techniques. Applications close 7 May. Email for an application form studios@parracity.nsw.gov.au

Public Art Commission

Wyndham city council is calling for expressions of interest from artists to undertake a site-specific public art commission. $175K commission will be in conjunction with major landscape works at the Wyndham Civic Centre. Expressions of interest close 21 May. t: 03 97420904 or www.tenderlink.com/wyndham for more information.

NAVA awards and prizes

The Windmill Trust Scholarship awards up to $5K to Regional NSW professional artists working in the areas of painting, printmaking, sculpture or drawing. Entries close 28 May. ... The Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship provides assistance towards educational travel or tuition costs for emerging artists working in painting, photography or sculpture. Up to 4 artists will be awarded $5K. Due date is 5 June. ... The Janet Holmes à Court Artists' Grant – helping to defray the costs of presenting your work in a public space, is coming up again with the next deadline 15 May and after that 15 August. NAVA also has a Marketing Grant, for NSW Artists, with deadlines of 15 May and 15 August. Help in applying for these grants is available www.visualarts.net.au/grantsprizes/tips-applying-nava-grants for more information www.visualarts.net.au

John Fries Memorial Prize 2010

The inaugural John Fries Memorial Prize 2010 is open to living Australian artists of all ages and disciplines who are not represented in a regional, state, territory or national public art collection. The Prize offers the winning artist $10K and a solo exhibition at Blackfriars off Broadway, Viscopy's new contemporary art space. 15 finalists will be selected to exhibit at Blackfriars off Broadway with the winner being announced at the exhibition opening in early August. The late John Fries was a former Viscopy director and honorary treasurer; the Prize has been donated by his family. Entry forms and conditions via www.viscopy.org.au/john fries prize.

STOP PRESS

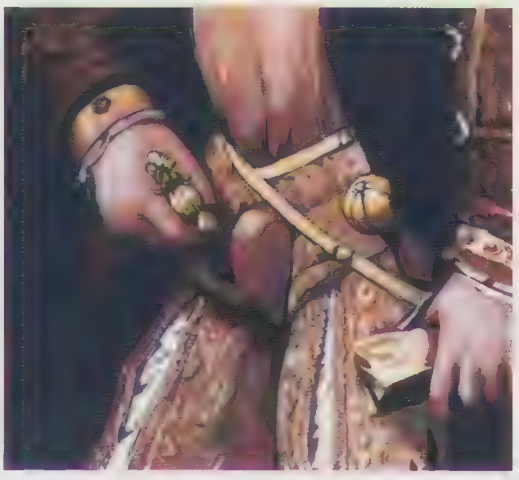
The inaugural Creative Economy Report Card was recently released by the ARC Centre for Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI), citing the creative sector (including advertising and marketing, architecture, design and visual arts, film, TV and radio, music and performing arts, publishing, software and digital content) as one of the past two decade's fastest growing elements of the overall economy. 'With nearly half a million workers in Australia – one of the largest workforces in the economy – it is as mainstream as mining, manufacturing, retail, farming and other sectors which play a key role in our daily lives and our prosperity,' said CCI director Professor Stuart Cunningham. The Report Card indicated the sector's worth at $31.1 billion (in 2007/08), generating 7% of all Australian earnings. It also indicated a trade deficit of about 2:1 for the creative sector, "leaving plenty of scope to expand Australian creative exports to offset the high level of creative content currently being imported'. http://www.cci.edu.au/publications/creative-economy-report-card-2010

She'll be apples

Imaging the Apple is the latest development of a successful show that toured the eastern states of Australia in 2004-05, and which now, naturally enough, has found its way to the 'big apple', New York. One story about the origin of this tag is that US jazz musicians called a gig an 'apple', hence a gig in New York City was 'the big apple'. A second tale concerns a high-class bordello in the 19th century run by an Eve, who had the best 'apples'. The premise for the original show curated by artist John R. Neeson was Paul Cézanne's ambition to 'astound Paris with the painting of a single apple'. The current edition which opened late March at the AC Institute (Direct Chapel) is curated by Neeson and Elizabeth Gower and includes 48 artists (including 22 Australian); from Stockholm, Beijing, Pittsburgh, New York, Toledo, Hollywood, Auckland, Plymouth, Melbourne Sydney and Central Australia. The exhibition finishes by the time AMA goes to press, but is accompanied by a catalogue. imagingtheapple.com

Simply Monstrous

Monstrosity Gallery is a new contemporary artist-run space nestled between Kings Cross, Woolloomooloo Bay, and Sydney's CBD, dedicated to young emerging artists working in painting, sculpture, illustration, new media, photography, jewellery, wearables, installation, street art and, well, everything else. In addition to an exhibition program which kicked off late April, the Gallery will also offer classes in life drawing, screenprinting, photography and film-making. monstrosity.com.au



Melbourne Art Fair 2010 4-8 Aug Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne Australia

Want to know where the best galleries go... Melbourne Art Fair 2010.

Leading galleries, representing over 900 living artists, exhibiting some 3,000 artworks gather together at the 12th biennial Melbourne Art Fair. Save the date!

Alongside over 80 selected national and international gallery exhibitions, Melbourne Art Fair 2010 presents programs including: Artist Commissions; Project Rooms, featuring independent and emerging artists; Education Programs; and free Public Fora and Lectures with artists, curators and international guests.

Melbourne Art Fair 2010 is presented by the Melbourne Art Foundation, a not for profit organisation supporting living artists.

Melbourne Art Fair 2010 Vernissage
Preview party Wednesday 4 August
Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne
7 – 10.30pm Tickets AU$175
Bookings essential vernissage@melbourneartfair.com

Tickets
4 – 8 August
Adult AU$25 Concession AU$19 Tickets at door

Collector Packages
Available for purchase prior to the event only, includes: 4 day unlimited exhibition pass, entry to Vernissage, VIP Lounge.
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Special accommodation packages through ACCOR hotels. Phone 1300 65 65 65 quote 'Melbourne Art Fair'. For online bookings visit www.melbourneartfair.com
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SONGS OF SURVIVAL IN A PRECARIOUS AGE

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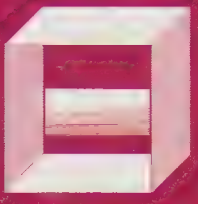

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Form Fire & Fruition

Geoff Crossley: A regional practice in clay

Madeleine Hayes & Ben Milne

Hawkesbury Regional Gallery would like to invite you to

Madeleine Hayes & Ben Milne

8 July – 21 August 2011

Please join us for the opening at 6pm on Friday 8 July

HAWKESBURY REGIONAL GALLERY
Deerubbin Centre (1st Floor), 300 George St WINDSOR 2756
T: 02 4560 4441 gallery@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au
Weekdays 10am - 4pm (closed Tuesdays & public holidays) Weekends 10am - 3pm
Free entry, all welcome

Communities arts nsw
rpg nsw
HAWKESBURY

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Free entry, all welcome

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HAWKESBURY

HAWKESBURY REGIONAL GALLERY

Ms Elizabeth Roet
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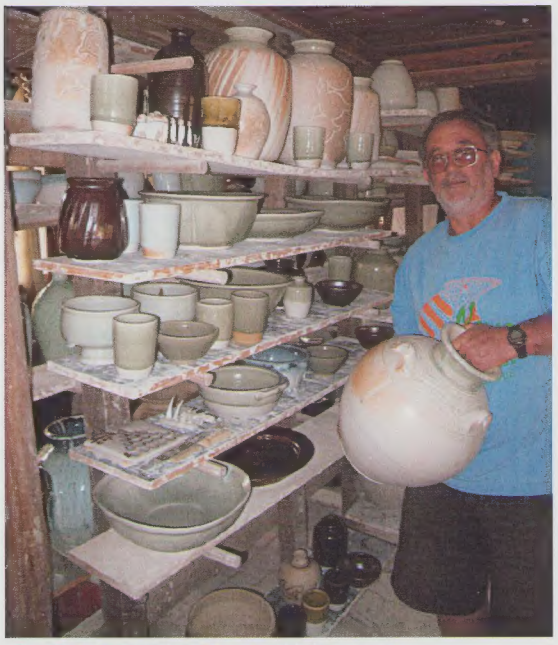
July-August 2011



Geoff Crispin in his Clarence Valley studio

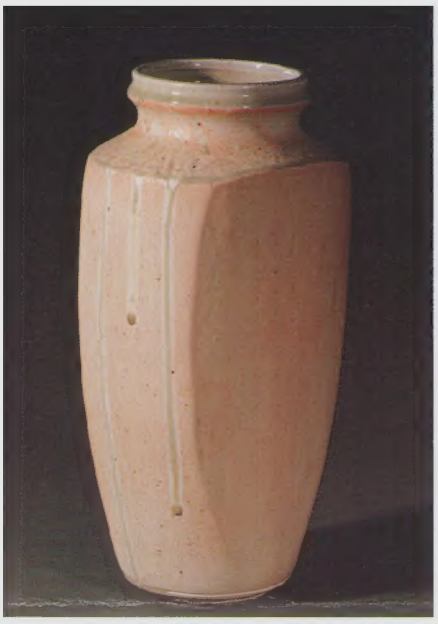
6 pm Friday 8 July
Exhibition opening by curator
Angela de Martino Rosaroll
Form Fire & Fruition Geoff Crispin:
A regional practice in clay
+ Madeleine Hayes & Ben Milne
+ Human Experience:
exploring the human condition and presence in contemporary ceramic practice
5.30 pm Artist's talk by Geoff Crispin

Sunday 7 August 10.30am - 2.30pm
Demonstration workshop and lunch with Geoff Crispin

Titled 'Working with Porcelain', this is a rare opportunity to become familiar with all aspects of a master potter's practice over an extended period. The day will include a floor talk in the exhibition, and demonstrations of various techniques including wheel throwing, slip casting and porcelain carving. Bring a packed lunch to enjoy on the sunny terrace, and the gallery will provide complimentary hot drinks, snacks and a glass of wine. Cost: $15 (members $10). Bookings/enquiries: 4560 4441

Friday 15 July School Holiday Activity
Paint a ceramic tile with artists
Madeleine Hayes and Ben Milne
Between 11am - 2pm
Cost: $10 (includes all materials and tile firing)
Bookings essential as places are limited and children must be accompanied by an adult
Phone: 4560 4441

Hawkesbury City Council
NSW Government Communities arts nsw
Australian Government Visions of Australia
Gordon Darling Foundation
rpgnsw Regional & Public Galleries of NSW
Grafton Regional Gallery



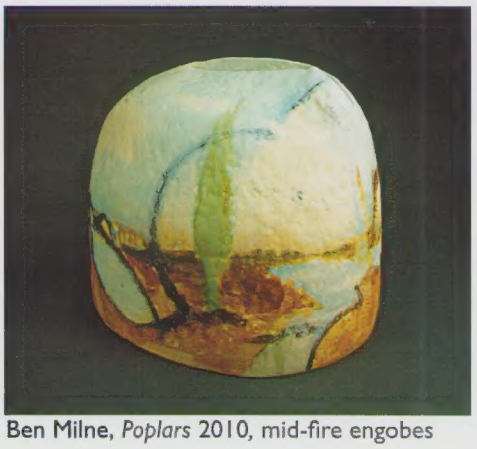
ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

Form Fire & Fruition Geoff Crispin: A regional practice in clay celebrates the career of renowned Australian ceramic artist, Geoff Crispin. The exhibition is a Grafton Regional Gallery touring exhibition, supported by Visions of Australia, the Gordon Darling Foundation and Arts NSW. Considered a master potter, Geoff works from his studio in the Clarence Valley in northern New South Wales, where he creates wood-fired porcelain. He incorporates local materials and the traditional forms and techniques of early Chinese pottery to create a unique signature style. The beautiful glazes on the works range form green and blue celadon to highly prized red copper and tea dust. Geoff's work is represented in both public and private collections throughout Australia and internationally.

Image: *Vase*, 1989 porcelain wood fired celadon glaze slip cast (model made by Geoff Welham). Private Collection © the Artist.

Form Fire & Fruition is complemented by two other ceramic exhibitions: one features work by **Madeleine Hayes and Ben Milne** and the second, titled ***Human Experience***, explores the human condition and presence in contemporary ceramic practice.

Madeleine Hayes, *Songbird* wood-fired stoneware, various glazes.



Ben Milne, *Poplars* 2010, mid-fire engobes and oxides.

Stephen Cramb, *Fallen Figure*, 2011 porcelain, automotive paint.

Juz Kitson, *Sacred Cow* (detail).

Ashley Fiona, *The Motherline* 2010 (detail) porcelain, plaster and found objects,

Human Experience

exploring the human condition and presence
in contemporary ceramic practice

Hawkesbury Regional Gallery would like to invite you to

Human Experience

exploring the human condition and presence in contemporary ceramic practice

8 July – 21 August 2011

Please join us for the opening at 6pm on Friday 8 July

Image: Stephen Cramb, *The Superman Theory* 2011 porcelain & automotive paint 90 x 40 x 45 cm courtesy the artist

HAWKESBURY REGIONAL GALLERY

Deerubbin Centre (1st Floor), 300 George St WINDSOR 2756
T: 02 4560 4441 gallery@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au
Weekdays 10am - 4pm (closed Tuesdays & public holidays) Weekends 10am - 3pm
Free entry, all welcome

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